THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXXVIII. No. 974. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1949 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE ANSWER TO MR. HOFFMAN

MR. HOFFMAN is certainly doing his stuff. In his speech, last Monday, to the seventeen Ministers representing their countries at the O.E.E.C. Council, he began with the warning that, unless Western Europe's dollar earnings rose dramatically between now and 1952, the trading account with the Western hemisphere would have to be balanced "at so low a level that it will spell disaster for you and difficulties for us." As a means to achieve larger export sales in the dollar area he prescribed, first, deflationary budgetary action and, secondly, the provision of "adequate rewards" to private enterprise engaged in export trade. But these exhortations, more calculated to appeal to a Tory Chancellor rather than to Sir Stafford Cripps, were only the prelude to Mr. Hoffman's major theme. By early in 1950, he said, the Marshall Plan nations must have ready a record of accomplishment and a programme "which together will take Europe well along the road towards economic integration."

The main requirements which, according to Mr. Hoffman, must be satisfied are that there must be a substantial measure of co-ordination of national monetary and fiscal policies; that commercial aims and practices at present in conflict must be brought into line; that quantitative restrictions on trade must be removed, and that there must be a realistic plan to rationalise Western Europe's production. This, he added, might call for the creation of "new central institutions"—presumably, a European Reserve Bank to control prodigal economies. Creating a "permanent, freely trading area," comprising 270 million consumers, would have a "multitude of helpful consequences." Were not the strength and efficiency of the American economy the direct reflection of a single market of 150 million?

According to rumour, Mr. Hoffman is inclined to resign; and this may be intended as his swan-song. Unless he is singularly naive, he can scarcely expect to see even the most rudimentary foundations of his integrated Western Europe laid within a couple of months. Mr. Hoffman urged that Ministers should recognise that a "very short time" still remained during which Marshall Aid would cushion to some extent the "inevitable short-run dislocations" which his programme would involve; but he showed no sign of appreciating how great are the practical obstacles in the path. To begin with, not only is Western Europe a net importer of foodstuffs and raw materials, but extreme dollar shortage affects the Marshall Plan countries universally. The aggregation of seventeen insolvencies does not make a solvent entity. Moreover, the national economies of Western Europe are more competitive than complementary.

But this does not exhaust the list of difficulties. Would the inclusion of Britain in an integrated West European economy be compatible with the maintenance of the present system of Imperial Preference? This hurdle might be surmounted, but it is hard to see how a Socialist Government in this country could agree to bring its monetary, fiscal and commercial policies into line with those of Continental governments to whom full employment is an utopian conception. But if Britain and the Commonwealth, as some believe to be the case, are excluded from the integrated Europe of the State Department's desire, then Mr. Hoffman's programme founders at once through the absence, in a predominantly *laissez-faire* Continent, of the controls and planning mechanism necessary for bringing integration about.

For the British Government the course is clear. It should make it plain, as Sir Stafford Cripps did in Paris, that it is ready to initiate and support any proposals for European integration which are compatible with the maintenance of full employment and planning. The relaxation of import restrictions which hamper intra-European trade is one such step; another would be the use of O.E.E.C. to begin the task of planning future capital investment to avoid the dangers of surplus capacity which are already arising in steel, engineering and oil-refining as a result of completely unco-ordinated national planning. Lastly, in the attempt to reduce dollar imports, there is obvious scope for a common effort to find substitute sources of supply. This is the real alternative to the Hoffman plan. What Britain can in no circumstances afford is to angle for extended American aid at the cost of committing itself to an Americanised European system in which the tendency would be for all workers to be levelled to the standards of the lowest, and whose ultimate ability to "stand on its own feet" by earning more dollars would be as doubtful as ever.

Agreement at The Hague

The Round Table Conference on Indonesia at The Hague has now successfully concluded its nine weeks' negotiations. This is a triumph for all concerned—for the progressive elements in the Dutch Cabinet, who were able to convince their unwilling colleagues of the disasters that would result from a breakdown; for the Indonesians, whose common front between Republicans and Federalists illustrates the unity that nationalism forges in Asia; and also for the United Nations Commission, whose persistence in mediation has given Uno its most outstanding success. Some-

time in December, sovereignty will be transferred to the United States of Indonesia. Immediately afterwards, the Constitution drafted at The Hague will take effect. Agreed on by the Republicans and Federalists and approved by the Dutch delegation, this Constitution proclaims the Republic "a democratic constitutional State of federal structure," whose sovereign authority will be exercised by the Government through the People's Representative Assembly and the Senate. The red and white flag will fly over the seven Negaras which were autonomous areas, over nine independent constitutional units and certain other territories. For the moment, it will not fly over New Guinea, the only outstanding point of difference not settled at The Hague. Both sides agreed that its future must be decided within a year after the transfer of sovereignty, and discussions will be renewed immediately the Conference is over, the United Nations Commission continuing to give its good offices. On most of the points in the Agreement—the status of the Union, the composition of the People's Assembly, the Army, the withdrawal of troops and the economic questions, which were a real stumbling-block—Dr. Hatta seems to have secured the substance of his claims. He should thus have a good chance of retaining the support of the major political parties at home. He will be able to call on a large number of able people whose statesmanship at The Hague was an important factor, as well as on such men as Soetan Sjahrir and the Sultan of Jogjakarta, who has deputised for him in his absence and contributed largely to the morale of the people during this period. And he will have the goodwill of people everywhere who rejoice with him in the victory of the Nationalist Movement and hope for the success of the new Republic.

Plus ça Change

Changes in the French coalition which have brought M. Georges Bidault to the Rue Saint Dominique are likely to mean little or no change in terms of national policy. The new Government, like the old (and indeed all French Governments since mid-1948), is one in which the Socialists will be able to exercise no real influence on economic affairs. With M. Petsche at the Ministry of Finance, the requirements of orthodox capitalism—however much disguised by high-sounding programmes for "European integration" and the like—are assured of loyal fulfilment. M. Bidault, like M. Queuille, will be expected to refuse anything more than token wage concessions despite the fact that the French cost-of-living continues to rise steeply; and it is hard to see how the Socialists can justify their continued presence in this company of staunch reactionaries. Where the change of Prime Ministers becomes interesting, however, is in relation to the next General Election, which falls constitutionally in 1951, but may well come earlier. To a great extent the results in this election, when it comes, will turn upon the nature of the electoral law under which it is held. The Right-wing parties want an end to proportional representation, but the M.R.P., which M. Bidault represents, are alone with the Communists in support of P.R. and opposition to election by simple majority. It is here, if anywhere, that M. Bidault's leadership may in time make a real difference.

No Solution in Greece

Mr. Bevin has done well to withdraw our troops from Greece. He would have done better to have withdrawn them long ago. They are removed now, presumably, because he believes that Greece has been made safe for the present Government in Athens. That is an achievement of which no member or supporter of this Government can afford to feel proud. It is good, nevertheless, that the troops should be removed if only because their withdrawal will reduce British intervention in the domestic affairs of Greece—and will, to that extent, bring the Athens oligarchy nearer to a proper understanding of its responsibilities. But it would be very rash to assume that their withdrawal closes the story of the civil war, and merely foolish to imagine that Greece to-day is nearer to a stable solution of its real difficulties. The guerillas, indeed, have had to call off their main forces, at least for the time being. This can only mean a respite; in any case the real problems of poverty, homelessness, and ruin are still present. Can the Athens oligarchy use this respite to good effect? From time to time they have claimed that reconstruction was going ahead. Now we learn, from their own spokesmen, that these claims are baseless. According to a statement some days ago by Mr. Stephanopoulos, the Minister for Economic Co-ordination in the Athens Government, the damage wrought by the civil war is reckoned at about 3,800 milliards of drachmae, or an amount equal to 85 per cent. of United States aid. Genuine reconstruction, all too clearly, could emerge only from a national effort united by enthusiasm, loyalty, and common purpose. There is absolutely no sign that the men in power at Athens are capable of arousing, leading, or inspiring any such movement for national recovery.

A New International?

Shooting between Hungarian and Yugoslav frontier guards reflects the growing danger of an explosion in the Balkans. Having secured their seat on the Security Council, the Yugoslav leaders —as Mr. Werth observes in an article on a later page—seem determined to try to invest their position with "world significance." What backing will they get from the West? Examination of the economic aid which the United States is now extending to Yugoslavia confirms the view that the Americans have decided to give just enough to encourage Tito but not enough to make him independent in the near future. It is in any case unlikely that the American investor, already hesitant to send his capital to Western Germany, will feel that Yugoslavia is a copper-bottomed investment; and it remains one of the unanswered questions whether or not the Yugoslavs will be able to compensate for the Eastern blockade by the American help that they do receive. With customary optimism and self-confidence, Marshal Tito and his friends are evidently convinced that they will. Not content with passive resistance to Soviet pressure, they are now considering ways of returning the pressure. One of these, apparently, might be to found a new International to which like-minded dissenters from Bolshevism could adhere. According to the Belgrade press, the Yugoslav leaders see themselves as the "new and pure" minority which shall purge the revolutionary movement of its errors and distortions. The Russians, of course, are comparing Tito with Trotsky. But the two cases are not parallel. Trotsky had to operate from the exile of Prinkipo or Central America. Tito has the tough land of Yugoslavia at his disposal. His problem is to resist Soviet pressure without selling out to the American investor.

Dr. Malan's Challenge

Britain cannot place any direct restraint upon the unpleasant domestic policies of the South African Government. But it can protect the Africans in the three Protectorates—Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland—from Dr. Malan. There can be no doubt, after Dr. Malan's speech last week, that South Africa wants to incorporate these territories, which have over one million inhabitants from whose ranks is drawn a substantial part of the labour force for the Witwatersrand mines. Clearly, it would be more "convenient" to have control over these Africans at home, as well as at work; the South African Government could then completely co-ordinate its labour and racial policy. Dr. Malan is being prodded by the more fervid Nationalists to assert South African sovereignty over these Protectorates, controlled by Britain, an "external" nation. The private discussions which have been going on for some time between Cape Town and Whitehall about the three Protectorates have not produced any agreement. Britain is well aware that to relinquish the Protectorates to South Africa would at once provoke serious trouble among their African subjects. Yet Dr. Malan can argue that, unless he can appease his more extreme followers by "regaining" the Protectorates for South Africa, they will drive him into secession from the Commonwealth and the proclamation of a Republic. If this is a bluff, it should be called. If it is not bluff, is Britain prepared to make a million Africans pay the price of appeasing a reactionary racialist Government?

American Strikes

By the beginning of this week, when Little Steel capitulated to the striking U.S. steelworkers, the drawn-out coal and steel strikes were already having serious effects. Steam train services had been cut, and the motor industry, together with other steel users, was preparing to shut down. Failing a settlement, by the end of this month nearly five million workers would have become unemployed. In the past, the Little Steel group—Bethlehem, Youngstown and Republic—have been the most obdurate opponents of the Union. This time, it is the giant U.S. Steel which has held out to the end. The new contract guarantees one hundred dollars a month pension at 65 for all workers with 25 years' service. This is to be financed entirely by the companies. Further social insurance benefits for all workers are to be paid for jointly by the employers and the men. This is not a great victory for Philip Murray's steelworkers. They have not secured any of their original wage demands—which the steel industry, making a 25 per cent. profit last year, could have afforded. But they have now firmly established the principle of company-financed pensions. John L. Lewis thought that he had done this for the miners, and the present coal strike was called because the coal operators began to repudiate the welfare fund payments when the Union contracts ran out a few months ago. But an all-round settlement is now in sight. The next time social security legislation comes up in Congress, the steel, coal and auto lobbies are likely to be backing it, for the larger and more widespread the pensions paid by the Government, the less private industry will have to pay, especially where the Union contracts provide for the company making up the difference between Federal retirement pensions and a fixed sum, such as one hundred dollars a month. More Unions are likely to take up these pension demands. But will this satisfy the rank-and-file who, for the most part, are more concerned with wage levels than still distant retirement?

Gold Coast Government

After the Gold Coast riots early last year, a Commission of Inquiry suggested that the time was ripe for constitutional reform. Indeed, this Commission went so far as to outline a new constitution of its own for the country. It was

sharply criticised for this, for if one lesson has been learnt in West Africa it is that things can no longer be "imposed" on the people. This was the origin of the Coussey Committee, set up by the Secretary of State in recognition of the Africans' determination to do things for themselves. The Committee, composed entirely of Africans, has worked under conditions of appalling strain. Although it included many Nationalist leaders, it has been hectored by the yet more extreme Nationalists, who have held dire threats of violence over the heads of the members, should they not "give immediate self-government." The draft constitution now recommended is for a popular House of Assembly, consisting almost wholly of elected Africans, and an Executive Council of 12, including at least 7 African Ministers and an African Leader of the House. This "Cabinet" is to be responsible back to the Assembly, and *not* to the Governor. But a final transfer of power is not suggested, as the Governor is still allowed considerable reserved powers. The unenviable task has now fallen to the Secretary of State of pointing out that constitutionally this is impossible. If the Governor is to have reserved powers, the Cabinet must be responsible to him as well as to the Legislature. It is awkward for the Colonial Secretary to appoint a "representative committee" and then to have to disagree with its findings on the crucial point of power, and impose his own views instead—particularly with public opinion as tense as it is in West Africa to-day. Unless a way can now be found to iron out these differences, there are serious difficulties ahead on the Gold Coast.

The Dear Money Men

The cry for "dear money" continues to go up from City editors and other advocates of deflation as a cure for our national ills. The most favoured argument is that, as the long-term interest rate, measured mainly by the yield on Government stocks, has been rising towards 4 per cent., there ought to be a corresponding movement in short-term rates, including the rates charged on ordinary bank advances. This, it is argued, would check both personal and business spending, and would thus administer a much sharper dose of "disinflation" than last week's economy cuts. Thus, the entire case rests on the belief that the cuts are inadequate and that what is needed is a general deflation and not merely a selective attempt to cut out extravagances and to postpone the less urgent calls upon the nation's productive resources. Such a deflation, it is argued, would restore competition and incentives by depleting order books and bringing back unemployment—of course, it is said, only on a moderate scale. What those who argue in this way leave out is the plain truth that a general deflation would hit the just equally with the unjust, would mean an abandonment of the attempt to plan production in accordance with any system of first things first, and would cost the Government itself a great deal of money in higher debt interest. No reason is given for the view that short-term rates of interest ought to be made blindly to follow fluctuations in long-term rates; nor is any answer made to the argument that such disinflation as is needed can best be made by selective action in granting or refusing bank credit, without penalising those who really need it by higher costs. The whole thing is simply another phase in the continuing struggle between planners and anti-planners, advocates of full employment and advocates of "salutary unemployment"—in effect, Socialists and anti-Socialist propagandists for a return to the traditional rules of the capitalist game.

Toward Lower Costs

Two reports issued this week, one from the Anglo-American Productivity Council and the other from the Lemon Committee set up a year ago by the Minister of Supply, urge the need for a concerted attack on the problem of industrial costs through standardisation of products and simplification of manufacturing processes and specifications. The two things—standardisation and simplification—are, of course, very closely connected. The fewer the varieties of things made, the larger the runs can be and the more the machinery can be standardised and the processes simplified. Moreover, the limitation of variety in the final product can carry with it much elimination of unnecessary fal-lals and finishes. Much of American high productivity is due, not only to the production of standardised goods from standardised parts but also to a deliberate policy of simplifying down to the essentials the finished product as well as the processes used in making it. Of the two reports now issued, the Anglo-American Council's deals mainly with simplification, whereas the Lemon Committee is concerned with standardisation. The former is mainly hortatory, whereas the latter proposes a campaign, to be carried on largely through the Trade Associations, for standardising products, specialising varieties to particular firms or plants, and making greater use of the British Standards Institution. The Lemon Committee is opposed to compulsion where standardisation can be achieved by agreement, but wishes the Government to make fuller use of its vantage position as a buyer (including that of the nationalised industries and the local authorities) to bring pressure on reluctant producers. It also urges greater price-differentiation between standard and non-standard products—which is in effect what the Government has been trying to achieve in a limited field by fostering the production of "utility" goods.

Dollar Drug

It is encouraging to find that streptomycin is now being produced in this country in quantities sufficient not only for reasonable use on family doctors' prescriptions but for export. Streptomycin is the first drug to be discovered which is effective against active tuberculosis. It is by no means the complete answer, since it makes little impression on chronic lung tuberculosis, which is the most widespread form; nor, in spite of more than two years of careful clinical use in hospitals, has a standard technique for its use been established. But the results obtained in tubercular meningitis and miliary tuberculosis (galloping consumption), both of them hitherto an almost certain death, have shown it to be a really great medical advance. Nevertheless, unless expertly used, it may have serious after-effects, and family doctors will be well advised to be cautious about prescribing it. This drug was discovered in America, and the present supplies have been manufactured by one company in this country which has bought the American "know-how." Two other British companies are developing their own methods, with a saving in dollars on the commercial patents. There is, however, a master patent taken out by Dr. Waksman, who has turned over the royalties to Rutgers University for the building of a million-dollar institute. Thus, ironically, this drug, which would never have been discovered without penicillin, is increasing our dollar gap, however small the fraction. It is even more ironical that we have had to pay royalties on the penicillin which the British scientists, with their simple-minded ethics, refused to patent and the production of which, even in this country, has been governed by American commercial patents.

PARLIAMENT: Our Mutual Friend

Wednesday

Sir Stafford Cripps should speak more briefly. Indeed, if he changed his length, he'd take more wickets. How predictable now is the long run-up of the introduction, the regular pace of the analysis and the dull clump of the homily. The House, listening to the Chancellor during the Economic Debate, had lost its wonder. "Lucid . . . ," "Immaculate . . . ," "Old Stafford . . . ,"—where were the complacent murmurs of 1948? The Chancellor did introduce a variation into his speech; he used the word "quantify." But not even that vivid word could minify the monotony.

By contrast with Cripps, Eden, who never lets a platitude slip, was lively. Yet the debate might have continued a dirge, had not the second day provided its distractions. Sir John Anderson, the Tiger of Bengal, opened for the Tories. Once upon a time he had called for the reduction of food subsidies. Since that day, Labour supporters had never stopped thanking him; nor had the Tories stopped describing him as an Independent. Last week, with Churchill at his side, he was unambiguously a Tory.

He began on a solemn note. He was sorry but he might have to use harsh words. (The Labour back-benchers laughed nervously. The Tories:—Yah-Yah-Yah-Yah.) He used them all right; though somehow they hurt the Tories more than they hurt the Government. He charged the people with having been "consistently misled into thinking they were better off," then wondered why the hard-boiled Socialists jeered. He regretted conditions before the war. He felt home-sick for parts of the Trades Disputes Act, and dared avow it. Behind him, faces grew longer. Something had gone wrong. Anderson was doing it again. When he sat down, the Tories cheered with relief.

Morrison, who followed, was not the man to let his tiger get away. While Anderson was licking himself, Morrison incited the Tories with a few unfriendly references to Woolton, and brushed off the Tory Strauss for correcting his grammar. Suddenly Morrison turned to Anderson—not, unfortunately for him, forgotten—and thanked him for "repudiating the financial and economic policy pursued by the present Leader of the Opposition."

This threw the two Tory comrades into an unprecedented disorder. Churchill expostulated with Anderson, then rose and complained that his friend was being misrepresented by the Lord President. As Morrison stood coolly looking at their confusion, Churchill hissed, muttered and gave orders.

"John, John, you *must* get up, John. You *must* get up and explain."

John got up, and did his best. Morrison tried to follow, but Churchill rose again to make it clear on John's behalf that he was entirely in favour of a return to the Gold Standard. (*Churchill (sotto voce)*: Am I right or am I wrong, John? *Anderson:* Certainly.)

All that was needed after this was one charge by Morrison. In the finest debating speech of this Parliament—he dissected the Tory past in order to expose the Tory future—he ensured a Labour victory, so that all that remained for following speakers was to clear the litter from the battlefield.

The other Three-line Whip Debate of the last few days dealt with the Lords, a subject which now produces a yawn from both sides of the House. The flatness and dullness of this debate was in itself an argument, as Morrison pointed out, for the speeding-up of Parliamentary procedure. The Tories, hard-pressed for new speakers and arguments, were forced to call in Lennox-Boyd, captain of their Third XI. He made a fairly interesting speech on Labour and the economic crisis.

More relevant to the constitutional question and more impressive were the speeches of Asterley-Jones, Eric Fletcher, Hollis and Professor Savory, though Professor Savory, the most loyal of Ulstermen, had the harrowing experience of being rebuked by Mr. Speaker for a well-meant reference to his late Majesty the King. On the Labour side, Chuter Ede, who had carried the Bill through all its stages, gave a familiarly well-balanced account of Lords v. People since 1911.

Maurice Edelman

DEMOCRACY'S DELEGATES

AFRICA is a formidable opponent. The first Annual Report of the Overseas Food Corporation, which assumed responsibility for the Groundnuts Scheme on March 1, 1948, is a depressing record of difficulties not yet fully overcome and meagre results achieved. Yet the Corporation deserves at least that criticism should be tempered by recognition of the fact that it took over from State-financed private enterprise a project which had been launched with all the urgency of a military operation but with a lack of reconnaisance and planning which would have courted disaster against an enemy in the field.

In March, 1946, Mr. Frank Samuel, of Unilevers, presented to the Government a plan to clear 2,500,000 acres of unoccupied virgin land in East Africa for the production of groundnuts. He put the capital cost of the scheme at £8 millions, and estimated that the average yield would be 400,000 tons of shelled nuts costing under £8 per ton to produce. The Government despatched a small Mission, consisting of Mr. Wakefield, a former Director of Agriculture in Tanganyika, a representative of Unilevers and a delegate from the Colonial Office, to investigate the possibilities on the spot. After a nine weeks' lightning tour, in which they covered 10,000 miles by air and 3,000 miles by road and rail, the Mission reported that they were "able confidently to support the project." They revised Mr. Samuel's estimates of cost, which they put at over £14 per ton of shelled nuts; but they advised that no fewer than 3,210,000 acres should be cleared. The cost of clearing an acre, they calculated, would be £3 17s.—a figure worth remembering—and total capital expenditure for the entire scheme was figured at £24 millions.

On this basis the Government, faced with the prospect of a long-term world shortage of fats, went ahead—or, it might be said, plunged ahead. It appointed the United Africa Company, a Unilever subsidiary, to take charge of the start of the enterprise. Private enterprise, with a free hand to spend £7 millions of public money advanced to it, was given its chance to show what it could do. The results were not impressive. By the end of March, 1948, only 7,500 acres were under crops, while less than 14,000 acres had been (partially) cleared. When the Corporation took over, it found that the difficulties of transport from the coast to Kongwa had been greatly under-estimated; that the repair and maintenance services for tractors and other mechanical equipment were gravely inadequate; and that there were serious shortcomings in the methods for controlling contractors' work and expenditure in East Africa. In short, the Corporation inherited a scheme which had been hastily improvised on the basis of a sanguine and, one would say, flimsy "appreciation" of task and target.

It is perhaps late in the day now to complain that the Government embarked on this project incautiously, and that it might have been better to experiment first with a small "pilot" scheme. More relevant to-day is the question whether the Corporation shows signs of retrieving matters. In the first twelve months of its operations it has added £16 millions to capital expenditure; but, whereas the Wakefield Mission assumed that 600,000 acres would have been cleared by March, 1949, the acreage actually cleared by that date was barely 50,000, and the cost of clearing each acre had been £30—nearly ten times the Wakefield estimate. Moreover, apart from unforeseen difficulties in dealing with the intractable bush, it had been found that harvesting was unexpectedly impeded by the compacting of the sun-baked soil, and the yield, this year, has been a pitiful fraction of the 227,000 tons foreshadowed by Mr. Wakefield and his colleagues for 1949. The scheme, it is now clear, had been launched without any adequate research into soil and climate.

The Report dwells on the extent to which heavy capital expenditure has been required in the improvement of port, railway and other transport facilities; and credit is rightly claimed for what has been done in the provision of hospitals, schools, housing and welfare for the African labour force. What the Corporation fails to do is to give a clear picture of its intentions. All it says is that development at Kongwa and Urambo is to be limited, in each case, for the time being to 90,000 acres, and that the future main effort is to be concentrated in the Southern area, where it has ordered that "the logistics of large-scale development in the year 1950-51 should be re-studied," on the basis presumably of its revised rotational policy of groundnuts and sunflowers.

This bleak terseness leaves unanswered many questions. What is now the estimated production cost of shelled nuts? Should the entire scheme be remodelled on much more modest lines, or are limitless millions to be sunk in clearing, at £30 an acre, ground whose yield has so far barely equalled the seed put in? Is it right that the Board of the Corporation should still include three members who committed themselves to initial estimates whose inaccuracy has been proved by experience to be so grave? Is there substance in current rumours that during the past seven months—that is, since the period covered by the present Report—the general situation has continued to deteriorate? Point to these searching questions is added by the article (on page 507) which we publish this week by Mr. Alan Wood, until recently the Corporation's information officer. He emphasises how indefensible it is that the administration of public funds on this scale should be in the hands of a Corporation whose operations are effectively screened by its Charter from Parliamentary or press scrutiny.

The issue which Mr. Wood raises is much wider than the affairs of O.F.C. In an endeavour to take the conduct of nationalised enterprises "out of politics," a democratically minded Labour Government has delegated their administration to bodies over whose doings the public has little or no control. In so far as they frame policies affecting the national interest, they may be responsive to general directives issued by the Minister who appoints them; but neither Parliament (which may not, indeed, have the time or the competence) nor any other tribunal has the power to probe their efficiency, their relations with their employees, or the adequacy of the services they render to the community. The trouble is not merely that the Government has bent over backwards to avoid the accusation of "jobs for the boys" and so permitted public corporations to be largely controlled by opponents of public ownership: it has so far failed to find a way to make the public corporation public. One missing element is participation by the workers and technical staff in management. The other is accountability to Parliament and through Parliament to the nation. Without these there is neither democracy nor Socialism.

THE BELGRADE ARGUMENT

THE Yugoslav indictment of Soviet Communism is a more dangerous challenge to it than all the talk about refrigerators in every home, and "a car for every worker." The refrigerator argument is easy for Moscow to answer. But when Tito says: "Something in the Soviet Union has degenerated, and has become so distorted that it is almost unbelievable"; when Pijade draws attention to the fact that the C.P. of the Soviet Union has had no Congress for over ten years, and that there is less democratic control of the hierarchy from the Party rank-and-file than in any other Communist Party; when Pijade also says that "anyone is Fascist or Trotskyist who does not subscribe to the Kremlin's Papal infallibility", when, day after day, the Yugoslav press fulminates not only that the Russians tend to treat Hungary, Rumania, and tried to treat Yugoslavia, as "colonial" territories, but that, in fact, even the "hirelings" like Rakosi are fully aware of it, and secretly complain of it—then one expects Moscow to take up the argument on the same high ideological level, and try to disprove, point by point, the incredibly damaging accusations made by Yugoslavia against the policies of the Soviet Government and the Soviet C.P. And these are only a few of the charges among many, many more. The whole ferocious campaign conducted by Russia against Yugoslavia is now claimed to be thoroughly incompatible with the assurances given by Stalin, Molotov and others about the rights of small nations; Russia, it is argued in Belgrade, is not in any way acting or thinking internationally; the *Gleichschaltung* of Rumania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc., is determined, first and foremost, by the requirements of the Soviet Union; and if it happens to be in Russia's national interests to sell out the Greek partisans, they will be made as easily the object of a Soviet-American *Kuhhandel* as were, in the Yugoslav view (though this is scarcely a very good example) the Slovenes of Southern Karinthia.

And then there is the Rajk trial. It is said by the Yugoslavs that this will be followed by a similar trial of Kostov in Bulgaria before long; and probably by another in Czechoslovakia, and another still in Rumania, and the purpose of all these trials will be to prove that Yugoslavia has been plotting against the existing order in these countries, and against the unity of the Soviet Bloc. Addressing, not only Western opinion, but, even more so, opinion in the Eastern countries, Tito announced that all the confessions of Rajk and the rest were a patchwork of lies, and that they were extracted by methods he did not know but which, in any case, he qualified as "monstrous." And to this he added something that, from the Moscow point of view must be even more unforgiveable than the rest: Trotskyism, he said, was admittedly a harmful doctrine; but there were many good and true Communists who had been put to death on the false accusation of being Trotskyists.

All this is no doubt making all the anti-Bolsheviks in the world hoot with joy; and Tito is well aware of "playing into the hands of the reactionaries" (who, he says, are no better than "they"—the Russians); but all this, he declares, had to be said in the interests of truth and the interests of Yugoslavia. For it is quite clear that, especially since the beginning of the Rajk trial, the Yugoslavia leaders have moved heaven and earth to give "world significance" to Yugoslavia, to prevent the conflict between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union from becoming localised; they have used every possible means of giving Yugo-

slavia world publicity and keeping it on the front page of every newspaper in the world. It seems that there was a time—about a month ago—when they were becoming slightly scared in case the Russians really tried to pull off a "Munich" (a good deal of alarmist talk on such lines could be heard among foreign diplomats in Belgrade, and I even had the impression that certain Yugoslav "contacts" were encouraged to stimulate these ideas). Certainly none of the foreign correspondents in Belgrade was in any way discouraged against sending the most alarmist stories.

The Russians one met about that time, and later in Belgrade, were in a very morose mood; the Yugoslav leaders, they would say, were deliberately creating a war psychosis in the country. At the same time, they would say that the "cold war" over Yugoslavia was in full swing, and that in the end, of course, the Soviet Union would win it. "But we are not in a hurry"; "time is on our side," and so on. As time went on, however, the Russians one saw grew more and more morose and bad-tempered. On one occasion one of them said to me: "Djilas is an ignoramus. He should have read Lenin's *State and Revolution*. Have *you* read it?" he almost bawled all of a sudden. I said (rather feebly) that I had. Then he said that on page so-and-so there was a passage which Djilas should copy out and read every night, for it would show him what an ignoramus he was—talking about the colonial exploitation of Yugoslavia, surplus value that went into the Soviet's pockets, and so on, when in reality there could be no perfect equality between an advanced industrial power like the Soviet Union and a backward country like Yugoslavia. "They are expecting complete levelling. No, my friend, the Stakhanov principle applies to States as well as to individuals."

The truth is that, the more one looks back on it all, the more does one realise how inevitable was the conflict between the Russians and the Yugoslavs. In their letter of April 13, 1948 to Stalin and Molotov, Tito and Kardelj wrote:

> It is hard for us to understand how such heavy accusations can be made against us, without the sources of your information being quoted . . . Our leading personalities are also charged with repeating statements which Trotsky once made. Here are some of the alleged remarks we are supposed to have made: "The Soviet Communist Party is degenerating." "The U.S.S.R. is trying to capture Yugoslavia economically" "The U.S.S.R. is dominated by Great-Power chauviuism."

At that time Tito and Kardelj pleaded not guilty to saying anything of the sort. Yet, when one to-day reads Tito's speeches, Pijade's articles on the Cominform, and the various *Borba* editorials, one finds that these are *precisely* the kind of accusations made against Russia and the Russian Communist Party.

No doubt, the Yugoslavs, after the Cominform resolution, tried to put the blame for all the trouble on Rakosi and the other satellites on the Cominform, which they then proceeded to treat as something independent of the Soviet C.P.; they were hoping, in this way, and by paying lip-service to the genius of Stalin, to leave a door open for a reconciliation with Russia; but they cannot have had many illusions on that score. The conflict with Russia was a fundamental one, and it went a long way back. I confess I did not attach much importance to it at the time, and dismissed it merely as a bit of idle gossip, but I remember how in 1945 at the time of Tito's visit, Ralph Parker, who had better Russian contacts than any other correspondent in Moscow said to me: "You know, Stalin does *not* like Tito." Then, with a knowing look, he changed the subject. What also struck some Russians at the time as a bit peculiar (though no great importance was attached to it) was that Tito seemed to get much less publicity in the Soviet press than any of the other leading Communists abroad, and that although he finally did receive the highest Russian war decoration, the Order of Victory, he received it only *after* King Michael of Rumania!

In the opinion of the Yugoslavs, National Communism, or Titoism, or whatever other name one applies to it, is not only something peculiar to the Yugoslav character (though it is more pronounced in their country than elsewhere), but it is something common to human nature, and is, in fact, practically inevitable, especially as Russia—and this the Yugoslavs specially go out of their way to demonstrate very carefully—is not herself internationally minded, but indeed ultra-chauvinistically minded, and cannot therefore claim to be a fountain-head of an internationalist ideology. The Yugoslavs say, and probably sincerely believe, that the other Eastern countries are deeply envying Yugoslavia, because she is the only one to have succeeded in saving her independence. In all Eastern countries, they say, there is a latent revolt against "enslavement by Moscow"; they prophesy that, in all these countries, "away from Moscow" moods are rapidly growing, and that only by revising her foreign policy completely can Moscow hope to preserve its moral authority over these countries. A common reflection one hears in Belgrade is: "We don't have to worry about a Cominform underground; the thing is *unnatural;* but what Moscow will have to worry about is the rapid growth of anti-Cominform undergrounds all over Eastern Europe. These are *natural*."

According to the Yugoslavs, the Communist parties of all the other Eastern countries are riddled with doubters and unhappy people, and thousands who, hard though they try, find it impossible to agree completely with the Russian lines of policy. Even the most blatant "hirelings" like Rakosi are unhappy men, "conscious of working against the interests of their own country"; and although no man was more loyal to Moscow than Dimitrov, he died an unhappy and broken man, the Yugoslavs assure you. What is more, the Yugoslavs have now even gone further than ever before by claiming that Titoism stands, in fact, for economic prosperity, working-class enthusiasm and an orderly agriculture, while a country like Bulgaria or Hungary is teeming with discontent and getting into a worse and worse state of economic chaos. Hence "witch" trials and the rest. Yugoslavia need not boast about her own economic conditions; but that is not the point. What is interesting is that Yugoslavia has set herself up as a beacon for *all* the malcontents in Eastern Europe, whether political or economic. That, economically, she is not in a good position to talk is true enough. But what matters is that the Yugoslavs are now trying to embarrass the Russians on *all* scores, and when they talk of working-class discontent in the People's Democracies, they are touching on a subject which has, at any rate, potential propaganda possibilities. They are hitting hard. Most of their propaganda will not reach Czech, Polish and Rumanian ears, but some will; and there is no doubt that the Russians will have to think of something better than call Yugoslavia a "monstrous country." The Yugoslavs are, however, pretty confident that the Russians have got themselves into a frightful jam, and that they simply have no answer.

Belgrade, October. ALEXANDER WERTH

(To be continued)

A LONDON DIARY

I AM told that the Cabinet, including Mr. Bevin, is in favour of recognising the new China without further delay. Without recognition it cannot negotiate about terms for British nationals in China or about Britain's future in Hong Kong. The stumbling block is reported to be the State Department which is said to remain hesitant about recognition. I have heard the question raised whether Britain shall be asked to play the part of "protecting Power" for American nationals and property. Britain may be less inclined to wait to keep in step with the United States after hearing what Pandit Nehru has to say on the subject. In the United States he has spoken with refreshing candour. (I have a couple of letters from Americans expressing gratitude for a foreign statesman who seems not to be overawed by the State Department.) He makes it clear that India has an independent foreign policy and will not be merely part of an anti-Communist bloc. The *Herald Tribune* has also published a summary of a very remarkable memorandum, presented by Nehru to the heads of the British and American Governments. It deals with the situation in Indo-China, where the French troops are, in effect, prisoners in their own towns, while most of the country is effectively run by Ho Chi-Minh. In short, Nehru is saying to Britain and America: "Communism is successful where the old Empires and out-of-date systems break down. You have the example of China. You had better recognise it and make what terms you can while you can. France is similarly courting disaster in Indo-China. Can't we get together to put into operation an economic, non-Imperialist policy which will make it unnecessary for the Asiatic peasant to look to Russia to free him from the landlord, the money-lender and the foreign ruler?" That, I think, is what Nehru is saying. Thank God someone is.

* * *

I wonder how many people really understand the proposal for a selective draft which is now being canvassed as the only alternative to conscription. There is no doubt that in terms of military efficiency it is irreproachable, since it permits the Service chiefs to get what they really want, much fewer men for a much longer time. Moreover, it enables the Ministry of Defence to achieve large economies in man-power and expenditure, since each year the exact number required can be called up, whereas under the present system the whole intake—apart from deferments—must be accepted whether they are needed or not. But what about the principle of fair shares for all? Under the selective draft, as practised in America, each young man's fate is decided by ballot. Imagine that the Service chiefs in 1950 calculate their requirement as 50,000 National Service men for a three-year period. Then 50,000 names are picked out of a hat and that is the draft for 1950. The rest of that year's intake are not merely deferred—they get off scot-free. To compare this with the Bevin boys for the coal mines is rather misleading. Under that scheme the alternative to the coal mines was the Army, but under the selective draft the alternative to a long period of military service will probably be no service at all.

* * *

I am very glad to see that the Chancellor has changed his mind about the Masterman Report on the political rights of civil servants. At the tag end of the summer sitting, he told the House of Commons that he had accepted it, as it stood—including the egregious proposal that civil servants should be permitted to stand as party candidates in local government elections provided

that they did not discuss national issues or share a platform with their fellow-candidates! Since then the Staff Organisations, which had not been consulted before the Government accepted the Report, have been active behind the scenes, and the rank and file of the T.U.C. Congress defiantly voted the Report down at Bridlington. This week the Chancellor announced his revised verdict. The recommendation that "industrials" should be freed from all limitations on political activity is accepted; the consideration of the code for civil servants proper has been postponed for some months, which means, I devoutly hope, that it is scrapped for good. Each Department will carry on as before. To make the Chancellor change his mind is a considerable achievement for Douglas Houghton, who led the protest on behalf of his one-time colleagues, from an inconspicuous position on the benches behind the Government. The real lesson of the climb-down is that a Socialist Government should have learnt by now not to select people like J. C. Masterman as its advisers. He and his colleagues were bound to make a reactionary report and the civil servants were bound to reject it with disgust. In order to be impartial, one really does not have to pack a committee with one's political enemies.

* * *

I was shocked to learn in South Wales last week-end how large a proportion of the mines still lack pithead baths. In other respects, has nationalisation changed things? Miners agreed that things were better—incomparably better, of course, than the days of unemployment—and that they were slowly improving. But there was also an undertone of disappointment. An experienced foreman, who took me round, who had himself brought up a family for ten years on unemployment relief, explained the point like this. The great mistake, he said, was that the Coal Board had not made a clean sweep of the old officials. It was no answer to say that they had technical knowledge which it was not easy to find amongst the miners themselves. It would have been better, at some loss, to have trained the miners. As it was, the men, all of whom had tragic and bitter stories to tell of past humiliations and petty meanness on the part of the employing companies, found it intolerable that the same men should still be over them under nationalisation. The foreman added a further comment. Naturally, he said, he was glad to have got nationalisation now, but it had come twenty years too late. After the first World War, Socialism was a religion to the miners. If they had won their way through then instead of being cheated by Lloyd George, they would have been on their mettle to make a success of it. There would have been enormous enthusiasm. But the long years of unemployment had taken the guts out of some, while many others, usually the most enterprising, had gone away. "A large proportion of the younger men to-day know nothing of the old battle, have scarcely heard about the great strikes of the 'twenties, and do not much mind whether the thing is a success or not." So we are up against a double trouble in the mines: the disappointment of the genuine Socialists and the indifference of many of the new generation.

* * *

A Labour Party organiser with whom I talked in South Wales confirmed something which I have heard from every other part of the country—that audiences to-day want fact and argument and not the old-fashioned type of propaganda. Since the war the whole character of the political meeting has been changing. In a world of dollar gaps, convertibility and off-shore purchases, the successful speaker, whatever his party, is the man who can explain the situation in a clear lecture and answer questions, not with a brilliant piece of repartee, but with solid information. Mr. Attlee's broadcast may have seemed an anti-climax to professional politicians who live a life of a rather artificial dramatics, but I believe that he got much nearer to the public mood than the stunt headlines of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*. I am very glad to see that Morgan Phillips has recognised this new mood and is taking the risk of publishing pamphlets, which ten years ago would have been dismissed by election pundits as far above the head of the average voter. *Re-equipping Britain*, for instance, is an objective and well-illustrated report which could be used by any W.E.A. class as the basis for a serious discussion of economic planning. *You and Tomorrow*—the latest Transport House production—is rather more glossily produced, but it is packed with information. I gather that it is a spare time job done by a group of Fleet Street Socialists. At the price of 2d., it is as entertaining and a great deal more instructive than any popular illustrated magazine on the market. The Press Lords should have a look at what their employees can do when they are given a free hand.

* * *

I was very disappointed with Mr. Tomlinson, the deservedly popular Minister of Education, when he played to the back-benches in the House of Commons last week with a feeble jest about corporal punishment. Has Mr. Tomlinson ever asked himself why people in this country—and only this country as far as I know—snigger when reference is made to this subject? Anyway, it was surely beneath any adult level to answer a question about the wisdom of caning adolescent boys for kissing girls with a jest to the effect that they probably thought the pain was worth the pleasure. Obviously, the question is not whether the boys minded. If they did not, what was the point of caning them? Some of them, for all I know, may even have enjoyed being caned in such a cause. The question for the Minister of Education is whether there can be any justfication for such educational methods. Apparently the headmaster looked out of the window on the last day of term and saw adolescent boys and girls kissing each other goodbye. He promptly caned the boys. The only possible result, I should say, would be that these innocent—because public—kisses would in future be stolen much less innocently. I recall the sound comment of that wise man Philip Wickstead, whom I once heard say that while a troublesome boy who wanted to upset the class might be checked by the cane, corporal punishment had never yet made a dishonest boy honest, a dirty-minded boy clean, or liar truthful.

CRITIC

SLEEPWALKING SCENE

(It has been officially denied that the Chancellor suffers from insomnia; it has not been denied that he walks in his sleep.)

LADY MACBETH: Sir Stafford Cripps
DOCTOR: Sir John Anderson
GENTLEWOMAN: Mr. Harold Wilson

DOCTOR: When was it she last walkt?

GENTLEWOMAN: Since the Premier went to the mike, I have seen her rise from her bed, unlock her closet, take forth her despatch box, write upon paper, read it, seal it; yet all the while in the most profund sleep.

DOCTOR: Well, well, well! She is entirely divorced from actuality.

(Enter Lady Macbeth with a paper)

GENTLEWOMAN: You see, her eyes are open.

DOCTOR: Yes, so is her mouth.

LADY MACBETH: Yet, here's a gap!

DOCTOR: She speaks. I will take down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance.

LADY MACBETH: Out, damned gap! out, I say! One, two; why then, 'tis time to cut. Fie, Attlee, fie! A Premier and afeard? What need we fear who curse it, when none can challenge our majority? Yet, who would have thought the Treasury would have had so little change in it?

DOCTOR: Do you mark that? They have done what they should not. They were only enjoying temporary advantages derived from the accumulated savings of the community.

LADY MACBETH: You must have guts to make the cuts; where are we now? No more o' that, Attlee, no more o' that. You mar all with this snipping.

GENTLEWOMAN: Heaven save the Board of Trade!

LADY MACBETH: Here's a deflationary slash still. All the Sterling in the Area will not lessen that yawning gap!

DOCTOR: I would not have this mess in my economy for the dignity of the whole Treasury.

LADY MACBETH: Put on your nightgown; look not so mazed. I tell you, the pound's devalued; it cannot come back to be saved.

DOCTOR: Unnatural deed!

LADY MACBETH: Come, come, come, come; give me your hand. There's Churchill knocking at the gate. Good-night, good-night, good-night.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

"I'm a clerk during the daytime," he said. "At night I keep an eye on excessive drinking and loose living in the West End.

"Another part of my job is to buy and read the obscene novelettes from the doorway stalls which appear in the West End at nights, I mark the objectionable bits and send them to the Council.

"That and watching the nude shows in the small suburban theatres or patrolling the parks keeps me busy in my spare nights."

"No, I don't get any pay for it. Just my expenses."—Interview in *Evening Standard*. (M. Shearn.)

Those of us who deplore and despise Communism ought to get together and refuse to pay our radio licences.—Letter in *Daily Mail*. (M. R. Gershon.)

Might I put in a plea that a man should not marry a foreigner?—Letter in *News Chronicle*. (Edward Banks.)

Pennies collected from the town's lavatories, a sure barometer of a town's prosperity, show an 8.7 per cent. increase.—*Daily Mirror*. (E. W. H.)

One talk given by a visiting minister was about onions. He said scientists could tell whether it was going to be a severe winter by the thickness of the overcoat of an onion! In times of anxiety I have often thought of God's care in providing a warm overcoat for the onion.—Letter in *British Weekly*. (Olwyn White.)

SOCIALISM BY PUBLIC CORPORATION

THE tragedy of the Groundnuts Scheme has a particular bitterness for Socialists. No one can fairly complain if Conservatives make the most of the spectacular failure, to date, of a vast State enterprise; and, in fact, so far their attacks have shown considerable restraint. But there is one consolation. Many of the mistakes made in the Scheme have been precisely due to the fact that it has *not* been run on Socialist lines. It has exemplified important lessons concerning the whole prevailing concept of Socialism by public Corporation.

There are two significant matters of principle involved. First, I had always assumed that one advantage of public as opposed to private enterprise was that, if things went wrong, the full circumstances would automatically come under public scrutiny, debate and decision, whereas many are the faults and failings of big business which escape attention. Second, I had always hoped that under Socialism those actually working in a particular concern would feel that it was *their* concern, with a greater share in shaping its policy than if they were working for a capitalist Board of Directors. Neither of these conditions seem to have been fulfilled by the Overseas Food Corporation.

Consider the first. It is hard to imagine any private company treating its shareholders as cavalierly as the public shareholders of the Groundnuts Scheme have been treated, with regard to information about what is being done with their money. There was published, in February, 1947, a White Paper (Cmd. 7030) which was the equivalent of a prospectus. Then, in January, 1948, came the first "Review of Progress" (Cmd. 7314), which told the story up to the end of November, 1947. Since then, no White Paper of any description until the first Annual Report of the Overseas Food Corporation, now published. It is already over six months out of date, since it deals with the year ended last March and, in fact, devotes much space to mistakes and miscalculations made before the Corporation took over a year earlier. Meanwhile, £25 millions—the whole of the originally estimated cost—has been spent.

As for Parliamentary scrutiny, there have been two debates this year, on March 14 and July 27, both on Opposition Supply days. Mr. Strachey refused to provide a White Paper as a basis of discussion before the first debate, explaining on February 7 that he did not want to "anticipate" the Corporation's Annual Report, "which will be submitted to Parliament . . . when the Corporation's accounts have been made up after the end of its first financial year on 31st March." His speech on March 14 was long and cloudy, omitting several important facts, and nobody in the following debate succeeded in penetrating the fog to expose the obvious weakness of his argument, or provide a clear picture of the position. The debate on July 27 was even more unsatisfactory. Mr. Strachey did not speak till the end of it; and discussion had to proceed on the basis of some facts and figures obligingly provided by Sir John Barlow, from the Opposition benches.

In the meanwhile a considerable amount of information has emerged in the press. It is fair to record that for some time I was able, as head of the Information Division of the Overseas Food Corporation, to do my job in public relations very much as I wanted: it was only as the failure of the Scheme became more and more apparent that insuperable difficulties arose. But even the provision of detailed facts could be no substitute for an honest interpretative review of them, which could only come from a high level. The public has learnt that the clearing difficulties in East Africa have been much greater than expected. It has learnt that, even after the land has been cleared, the growing of groundnuts on it has not yet proved an economic proposition. But it has not been told openly whether these things represent temporary setbacks, or fundamental flaws affecting the whole future of the Scheme. And though it has learnt that the original estimates of Cmd. 7030 have been hopelessly falsified by events, it has not yet been presented with any revised prospectus to replace it.

Nothing could have been more misleading, for instance, than the whole presentation of Mr. Strachey's case on March 14, with his statements that "the revenues from the Scheme may well add up to anything up to twice the original estimate," and that "it will be . . . far more profitable than was estimated originally." Yet, before we condemn Mr. Strachey out of hand, we must consider the wider issue involved. It is his personal misfortune that the stark failure of the Scheme has brought into sharp focus a fault of public Corporations as a whole; it is a fault which, for all I know, may apply in lesser measure to all of them.

Who can question a public Corporation? Who can ask what it is doing with the public's money? The public itself has no rights in the matter. Neither, to any real extent, has Parliament. Under the Overseas Resources Development Act the only man (apart from the Treasury) with power to interrogate the Overseas Food Corporation is the Minister of Food. Its Annual Report, though laid before Parliament, must be in the form he prescribes; and he can demand facilities for checking information he is given. The Minister is thus expected to play a divided role. He is counsel for the prosecution and the defence at the same time. It is his job, as Minister, to scrutinise the Corporation's activities on behalf of the public, exposing every mistake which has been made; but, as a Party politician, his future career may depend on mistakes being hushed up, and on the best possible presentation of the Corporation's record being put before Parliament.

This problem is particularly acute in Mr. Strachey's case, because he is personally identified with the Groundnuts Scheme in the public mind. When, on March 14, he made a mild reference to miscalculations by the Mission which drew up the original White Paper, he was immediately denounced for a "distinctly mean" attempt to pass the blame to a civil servant. One was left with a certain sympathy for Mr. Strachey; one wondered exactly what he *could* say. It was perfectly obvious, since the Scheme had set out to grow groundnuts and failed to produce any worth mentioning, that some person or persons must have made a mistake somewhere. So any full and true account by Mr. Strachey must have put the blame on *somebody*, unless he took all the blame himself. And there may be some circumstances in which a Minister cannot even do this without accusing others: his worst admission against himself may be that he has failed to check other people's errors.

In short, the whole question of the relation between Minister and public Corporation is incredibly tangled, and badly needs better definition. A Minister may at times be in the position of taking the responsibility and making the excuses when things go wrong, while any attempt to put things right would immediately expose him to charges of "political interference" or "passing the blame." I am concerned here not with any particular instance, but the general principle. For it is Government policy, as stated by Mr. Morrison, that public Corporations should have the greatest possible freedom from "political interference" and political criticism; and it is this whole policy which needs re-thinking, if our goal is really democratic Socialism.

I have said that a second sin of the Groundnuts Scheme, from the point of view of Socialist principles as I see them, is the aloof failure at different times to take into consultation the middle and lower ranks. On this point I must be brief: having been intimately concerned with the internal affairs of the Corporation, it is hard for me to write anything without giving away inside information. I may perhaps mention the two joint protests made by Heads of Departments in East Africa, to the effect (among other things) that full use was not being made of the technical knowledge of men on the spot. Experience on the Scheme has given me a new sympathy with the demands for more workers' participation in the control of nationalised industries at home. On the Groundnuts Scheme the "proletariat" is, in effect, African, so it is not a question of wages or working conditions; but exactly parallel demands have arisen on the executive level, both in East Africa and the London office. Perhaps, after all, the main argument for letting coal miners run coal mines is that they may know more about it than any superior body appointed over their heads, and may make fewer mistakes.

Having thought of little but groundnuts for the last eighteen months, I must leave others to apply the lessons at home. The Overseas Food Corporation gives us a chance to study the principles involved, writ large by the extent of the failure. There was never any dispute about whether the Groundnuts Scheme should be started or not; and nobody questioned that it must be carried out as a public enterprise. A sharp analysis of what has gone wrong will, therefore, help towards finding the right form of organisation for the many public concerns which are bound to continue whatever party is in power.

ALAN WOOD

RED LIGURIA

ONE of the more surprising aspects of modern theocracy in Italy since the installation of Christian Democracy under the leadership of De Gasperi, is a most un-Mediterranean prudery. The Popes and Cardinals of the Renaissance may have patronised the decoration of their palaces and castles with nymphs and goddesses; not so their successors of to-day. This latter-day primness seems to be growing as the Vatican gathers its strength for the ardent revivalism of the Holy Year which begins on January 1st. Only a few months ago a poster bearing a reproduction of Botticelli's *Primavera* was the subject of strong clerical disapproval. Special hotels are being built, it is said, to accommodate next year's Transatlantic pilgrims—to protect them from the dissolute ways of Rome and, no doubt, to channel off the dollars into the right Exchequer.

Things lately seen and heard suggest that much of this prudery is more than affection. It seems to be part of a reaching backward into the past, a search for security in tradition, which is characteristic of De Gasperi's Government and those who support it. I was thinking of this the other day in Genoa. We were walking in the gardens of the town hall, which is situated in the Palazzo Tursi, one of the half-dozen great Renaissance palaces of the Proud Republic. The Tursi, like the Biano next door and the Doria on the other side of the Via Garibaldi, has a long history. There is nothing about it that is in the least prim. One of its pleasant terraces, watered

by a fountain and shaded by tall chestnuts, was for many years a café. Byron frequented it; so did Verdi. And, as everywhere in Italy, the antique is mingled amazingly with the modern. Where the ancient masters of Genoa sat in council, beneath their dragon'd gonfaliero, to plot unanimously the maritime downfall of Venice and Leghorn, there now presides a Communist mayor and a city council divided more bitterly than were ever Guelph and Ghibbeline.

The mayor may be Communist, but the Church has her faithful here too. "I'll show you what this Christian Democracy really means," said my friend Marzo, who shares the mayor's views with a few artistic variations of his own. "It's an Anglo-Saxon puritanism that's come to curse us." He brought me through the neatly bushed and clipped gardens to a stone Venus, which had been found, he explained, on a rubbish dump many years ago and was now gracefully standing in a fountained niche. Time and the water of the fountain had given her a kindly human look; until lately, furthermore, a few mosses could be seen clinging with shy indiscretion to a venerable portion of her lavish form.

"And I was strolling here quietly one day," Marzo said, "and admiring the delicacy of Nature in this matter, until the gardener came by. He doesn't agree with us, you know. I drew his attention to what I really thought was rather lyrical. But he, you know, was shocked. *Ma questo sta male*, says he, and goes with a scrubbing brush and scrubs off every scrap of moss, indiscreetly fond or merely growing wild. And they say, the gardener's party, that politics has no concern with art."

Marzo is probably one of the best of contemporary Italian writers. Or he would be, if only he could be bothered. His *genre* is highly Genoese, like his dialect. Better still, it is Chiavarese, since it is really in Chiavari that the world begins and ends. To wander with Marzo down Main Street in Chiavari, beneath the pillared mansion where he was brought up by his terrible money-grubbing grandmother, beneath the houses of the truly great among the grocers and ship's chandlers, through the square with Mazzini's monument to Chiavari's one moment of divine madness, and let the flow of gossip run until your strolling is interrupted, every five steps or so, by a halt to face each other and argue the point more nearly—is to plunge into the authentic stuff of Manzoni, of the great provincials. Rome is a southern den of thieves; Milan is an Austrian redoubt. It is here in magical Chiavari, halfway between Rapallo and Sestre and missed by the dazzled foreigner, that Italy resides. Yet even here the pillars of tradition are shaking in their seat. Marzo's grandmother and her kind, giants of the market place who were famous from Spezia to the French coast, are dead and almost forgotten. Partisans came from Chiavari during the war; once or twice even they raided back into the town, shattering a thousand years of law and order for a brief eternity, and nowadays the Reds are in power as they are in most of the towns of the Riviera. Things are going to the dogs. Profit and loss are pushed aside for crazy schemes of social welfare. There is even talk of drainage. As if the beach were not at every man's doorstep . . .

The reason why Liguria is Red is not simply reaction against holiday luxury in villas and hotels which make a paradise for the few along this coast. The Riviera has more heavy industry than any other part of Italy. As much as 47.1 per cent of the population is employed in industry and in communications compared with 33 per cent for the whole of northern Italy (reckoning Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria, Venice, and Emilia); and only 25.4 per cent in agriculture compared with 48.3 per cent in all these northern provinces. The working class is correspondingly strong.

"What can we do with them?" the leader of the Christian Democrat minority on the Genoa city council said to me, "the Communists are like soldiers in their barracks—in those great factories along the coast." It was from these barracks that four-fifths of the 20,000-odd partisans of Liguria were recruited. And, from these, thousands of men and women descended upon Genoa like a storm, disarming the police and mounting barricades, on that feverish day of July 1948, when a Fascist student shot down Togliatti.

To the economic distortions of over-industrialisation and luxury tourism there must be added, as a third reason for Ligurian Communism, the extreme poverty of the peasants. These high mountains, arched in glaucous mist above the Tyrrhenian Sea, yield little food. Holdings are astonishingly small. In the province of Genoa, for instance, 9,842 acres of cultivated land are divided into more than 12,000 holdings of about four-fifths of an acre each. Another 10,500 holdings are less than seven acres each; 5,790 are from seven to 11 acres; 5,729 from 11 to 22 acres; while 105 holdings have about 777 acres each. This means that many peasants supplement their wretched living with casual urban labour.

The condition of the people, accordingly, is bad. This may not be apparent from the noisy strolling *corso*, the boatmen chanting at their nets, the naked laughing children, and all the relief of blue skies and sun. It is quite apparent from the health statistics. Infant mortality for the whole country fell from 103.1 per 1,000 live births in 1936-40 to 84.1 in 1946 or an improvement of 18.33 per cent. Yet in Liguria it remained almost stationary at 65.6-64.4 during these years. Only in Sardinia did the figure rise—from 97.2 to 108.1—and only in Tuscany did it remain as in Liguria, almost the same. "But," as the Genoese economist Antolini has pointed out lately, "neither in Tuscany nor in Sardinia are there the great riches, the Grand Hotels, the Casinos, the palms, the flower gardens, the ports and great factories of Liguria; notwithstanding these, more infants die here than in almost any other part of Italy."

The figure for tuberculosis, the scourge of a country where feudalism and Fascism have combined to keep things backward, are even worse. In 1937-39 as many as .805 deaths per 1,000 were registered as due to tuberculosis; in Liguria the figure was .933. In 1946 these two figures were .823 and 1.050. Liguria, Antolini comments, has thus become "the only province of Italy in which mortality from tuberculosis has grown since 1940 and is now greater than one per thousand of the population." Even the health of the people of Calabria and Sicily, which are a by-word for backwardness, is better than that of the Riviera.

No wonder that the ideological battle rages fiercely. And not the least important aspect of this internecine warfare—conducted, at least at the top level, with true Genoese duplicity and respect for the conventions—is the writing of the history of the last few years. Did the Communists liberate Genoa, or did the Christian Democrats?

A committee appointed by the City council is now collecting material for an official history of the Ligurian Resistance. The members of this committee do not agree with one another, as far as I can see, in the least; and I doubt if much will come of it. Meanwhile, each side is working hard at its own version. The Communists say that the people of Genoa, organised by the clandestine Committee of National Liberation, and backed by the partisans descending from the hills, took Genoa from the Germans by bitter street-fighting. My own experience, the product of several months with the Ligurian partisans from January 1945 until the end of the war, happens to confirm this. There was no shadow of doubt in April 1945, for instance, that the German commander of *Festung Genua*, Major-General Günther Meinhold, surrendered to the Committee of National Liberation after threatening to bombard the city and blow up the port, and after being told that he and his men would pay for it with their lives if they did that. This German commander has since recorded, in a series of articles published by the *Secolo Decimonono*, a conservative paper of Genoa, that he was able to persuade his more audacious commanders to surrender only after pointing out to them that they were surrounded by the partisans.

But the Christian Democrats do not like this version, since it supports the view which they are working day and night to undermine—that the partisan insurrection was an act of national maturity—instead of being, as they maintain, a plot to overthrow the foundations of Italian law and order. If that view were right, after all, there could be no valid excuse for vilifying the partisans or for popping them into gaol whenever occasion offers. So they advance another version—that the only true hero of the liberation of Genoa was the Catholic hierarchy, led by Cardinal Boetta of Genoa. The truth about the liberation of Genoa, indeed, will shortly be covered with a veil far more respectful than any the Tursi's Venus ever had; and this one, by contrast, the Church will be glad to leave intact.

BASIL DAVIDSON

COLUMNISTS

THE columnist is the big shot of modern journalism. The editor has been elbowed into anonymity and the foreign correspondent's by-line appears less on the front pages than on the file of his unpublished copy. But the columnist is given his regular and prominent place in which he can parade his news and views. More than any of his less privileged colleagues he becomes a familiar figure to the reader, to whom he appears to lead a fascinating life—eating in the best places and rubbing shoulders with the famous. He seems to be always in the know and, sometimes, the personal confidant of the great—especially if readers have never heard of a press agent or attended a press conference. He will be asked to judge baby shows and invited to go on the maiden voyage of a new liner. He may, if he writes on politics, be more influential than his paper's formal editorials. More than any other type of journalist, he offers his readers a vicarious enjoyment of the high life or a guide through a perplexing world. And this, of course, is the secret of the columnist's appeal. He carries personal journalism to its logical end. If he discusses events, it is to give his personal opinion of them. If he describes personalities, it is again through the spectacles of his own personality. He is, by definition, the enemy of the flat and impartial statement. He can only be successful if he has strong and provocative views.

It is hard precisely to define a "column." Each columnist has a formula of his own. But, in the sense in which I am using it here, the definition includes, in this country, political commentators such as A. J. Cummings of the *News Chronicle*, and excludes sheer gossip-writers, pure humourists, straight essayists and, if one is strict, the collections of snippets which are jammed together as "diaries" in the London evening papers. Even so, there is left a quite respectable number of genuine columnists, either using their own names or disguised by Latin and

other pseudonyms. They are accepted parts of our newspaper landscape. Many of them, as a quick glance at the U.S. press reveals, have drawn on American examples. Tom Driberg, in his recent book *Colonnade*, describes how the William Hickey column that he wrote for years in the *Daily Express* was based on American models, on the direct instruction of Lord Beaverbrook. He then goes on to claim that the "standing and quality" of British columnists to-day is higher than that of their American counterparts.

Is this true? Driberg, good columnist as he is, sums up U.S. columnists with an epigram. They fall, he suggests, into two categories:

> . . . the Winchell category, readable but not worth reading; and the Lippmann category, worth reading but unreadable.

This wise-crack has substance in it, though it is rather unfair to quite a few serious and important columnists. But it misses the vital point. "Standing and quality" are relative terms. What matters is influence and the ends to which it is devoted. And the most successful American columnists enjoy an influence far greater than anything a journalist can hope to achieve in this country. Since there are no "national" newspapers, a columnist is syndicated across the country. If he is a Drew Pearson or a Walter Winchell, he may appear in hundreds of papers with a combined circulation of between twenty and thirty millions. Such columns are popular both with readers and, as a result, with editors. Some papers are stuffed with columns. The New York *Post*, an afternoon paper, is perhaps the extreme example. At one time it employed thirty-three columnists who, together with comic strips and advertising, virtually squeezed ordinary news out of its sixty-odd pages.

Many of such columnists seemingly set out to make the reader well informed about things which do not matter. Take, for example, a typical "Lyons Den" by Leonard Lyons. It is twelve hundred words long, the text broken into ten paragraphs. Every one is an anecdote about a writer, a politician or an entertainer. Seven end with wise-cracks. Not one amounts to anything. Danton Walker's "Broadway" column is a triumph of abbreviation. In one of his columns recently, less than six hundred words long, I counted references to thirty people, fourteen shows and thirteen other subjects, ranging from an alleged request from the Shah of Iran for $250 millions from the Import-Export Bank to Gussie Moran's change from lace panties to matching hair bows and tennis socks.

Such columnists do not restrict themselves to personalities. A snippet about the Stork Club is likely to be followed by a tip, "straight from top intelligence brass in the Pentagon," that a cholera outbreak in Cairo was a Soviet experiment with germ warfare. In the next line, the reader is told that "it was blue booties for the John Smith's at the Harkness clinic last night." The technique is ingenious. It is to sandwich a rumour or a downright lie between two proveable facts.

The famous columnist is one of the few Americans, the President apart, who is sure of a national audience. He exploits it to the full, collecting money for his pet charities, running feuds against his personal enemies—Roosevelt was a favourite target for sneering and vicious innuendoes—or getting his readers to put pressure on Congress. He can get away with crude polemics no British editor would print, such as this typical passage from Fulton Lewis, Jr.

> I am an American who can't sit by self-indulgently twiddling his thumbs while a bunch of drooly-mouthed fellow-travelling rats gnaw at the vitals of our government.

The reactionary columnists are given their head. I have just read, for instance, this unusually mild comment of Westbrook Pegler. After describing union leaders as "loafers, counterfeits and rascals," who have "brutal, dictatorial whims," he argues that trade unions are "absolutely bad and ought to be wiped out." Why? For one reason

> . . . they are grabbing millions out of the pay of citizens who were driven into their rackets by political force and spending it to elect the same kind of bankruptcy and poverty government that the British people get from their Socialist party holified with the name of Labour.

A few columnists help form opinion more soberly, as Max Lerner does for a limited liberal audience, as Walter Lippmann does for intelligent conservatives and as the Alsop brothers do for the Luce-minded section of the population. But their influence is as much smaller than that of their frenetic colleagues as their responsibility is greater.

By comparison, the British columnists certainly come out well. They do not suffer from many of the American columnist's vices. Decency and the British libel law combine to limit their use of adjectives. They do not launch violent and unscrupulous vendettas. Where they appeal to prejudice, they do so in a more or less gentlemanly manner. Their writing is more coherent if rather more parochial. They rely much more heavily on comment than on personal "scoops."

The real difference between British and American columnists springs from the fact that this country is not nearly so publicity conscious as the United States, where press agents, working on a commission based on "insertions," are probably more numerous than their myriad clients. This reflects the American assumption that "if it's not news, it ought to be." The British assumption is "if it's not news, probably there is a good reason for it." Apart from the elaborate machinery designed to make news of everything that happens between the Atlantic and the Pacific, Americans themselves are more anxious to give information. In the United States, responsible officials will sit back and, after casually asking what you want to know, proceed to tell you faster than you can ask questions. I know one British columnist who, after he had had some experience of this attitude during an American visit, felt that he could never again write an adequate column in this country. "I can't get the facts," he complained, "or when I do, I can't publish them, or I can't name names, or people will never talk to me again."

The American expects publicity. U.S. politics are a war of pressure groups in which columnists play an important part. "Leaks" are more often deliberate than accidental. The War Department, in a feud with the Navy, tips off a columnist on a story about the futility of the aircraft carrier. The Navy then reciprocates by creating a scandal about the B36 bomber. The U.S. Treasury, for its own purposes, helps out columnists with "inside" stories on the devaluation of the pound. A disgruntled machine politician spills the beans on his erstwhile pals who have squeezed him out of their rackets. So the columnist never lacks for material. Everyone knows that other will talk, so the considered indiscretion becomes a recognised practice. In this game, one comes philosophically to accept bad publicity with good. The result is that the American public, whenever it manages to sift fact from fiction, is often much better informed about the details of politics and government than the British public. It is easier, for instance, to find out what is happening on the top levels of the Democratic Party, merely from reading the newspapers, than it is for journalists themselves, in Britain, to get an idea of the relationship of forces inside the Labour Party.

Perhaps our reticence, though it handicaps the columnist and makes for duller journalism, is to be preferred. But it is not to be preferred when it leads to excessive dependence upon public relations officers, on "guidance" and "briefing," to a desire to avoid embarrassing people, to an unwillingness to spend much effort in digging out a story. Space shortage, possibly, is one explanation of the complacency of some British journalists. It creates a temptation to take the easy way out, to regurgitate the familiar and the obvious. Our columnists—and British journalism as a whole—would profit greatly from more free speech and more sedulous searching for facts.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

MALTA'S PROBLEM

(By a Correspondent)

THE Maltese Labour Cabinet, with Dr. Paul Boffa as Prime Minister, has held office since self-government was restored to Malta in 1947. A fortnight ago, the Ministry lost the confidence of its own party and has been in acute danger ever since. The trouble began during August, when Dr. Boffa and his Deputy Premier, Mr. Dom Mintoff, came to London to protest against the Admiralty's decision to dismiss twelve hundred workers from the Malta dockyard. There were long conversations at all levels with the Colonial Office. The Admiralty would concede no more than the spreading of the dismissals over a period of six months, so that only fifty men a week should be laid off. When Dr. Boffa and Mr. Mintoff went on to complain about what they called the British failure to rescue Malta from her post-war economic difficulties, they got little comfort in return. So they delivered their famous "ultimatum" to Mr. Creech Jones. They demanded that, before the end of August, the British Government should consent to Malta's receiving a direct share in Marshall Aid. Failing this consent, the Maltese Government would ask their people in a national referendum whether they wished to stay in the Commonwealth or to throw in their lot with the United States or with any other major Power which offered economic aid in return for the use of Malta as a base.

Mr. Creech Jones could do nothing but reject this extraordinary document at once. This he did unofficially, for it was never officially presented to him. Dr. Boffa then flew back to Valetta and held a midnight Cabinet meeting, where there was a general refusal to sign the ultimatum as it then read. Only Mr. Mintoff and Mr. Ellul (Maltese Commissioner in London) were strong for retaining the phrase "any other major Power." Dr. Boffa himself was happy at its excision. A modified version, threatening secession only to the U.S.A., was agreed on by the Cabinet. With this, Mr. Mintoff flew back to London, but he then seems to have opened negotiations with the British Government on his own account and unknown to his colleagues. When Dr. Boffa rejoined him in London, the two quarrelled, and Mr. Mintoff, because the first draft of the ultimatum had been torn up, resigned his Deputy-Premiership and his portfolio as Minister of Works. Dr. Boffa recommenced in a more conciliatory fashion the talks with the Colonial Office. The ultimatum was shelved altogether.

On his next return to Malta, the Prime Minister told the full story at a stormy session of the National Assembly, while an excited crowd gathered in the Palace Square outside. But the

next stage in the crisis came a month later, on 14 October, when the Maltese Labour Party conference carried a vote of no confidence in Dr. Boffa. The Prime Minister resigned the leadership of the party; but his Cabinet still supports him, and he still commands a tenuous majority in the Assembly. In such a situation, he is unlikely to wait long before making an appeal to the electorate. It is not certain that Mr. Mintoff's ascendancy in the party would be confirmed at the polls. He and Mr. Ellul and Ellul's journalist brother, Roger, are the idols of a noisy political minority —for membership of the Maltese Labour Party is small. Moreover, the Mintoff group is suspected by many good Maltese Catholics of being tainted with Communism. To such suspicions, Mr. Mintoff has in the past been sensitive enough to fight libel actions against editors who repeat them. At an election, the powerful voice of Archbishop Gonzi would probably be uplifted against the extreme Left, indirectly, but obviously. When the Church speaks, every Maltese heeds. Nor will the General Workers' Union, whose numbers and influence grow, necessarily desert Dr. Boffa for good. The dockers of Floriana and Pawla—sharply as they feel the Admiralty dismissals—do not see the issues entirely as Mr. Mintoff sees them. In short, the Maltese people have a working arrangement with the British, and few of them believe that the arrangement has yet reached breaking point.

Most Maltese would agree that Dr. Boffa did not in the end come empty away from London. The Admiralty's plan to remove 1,200 dockers has been balanced by an offer from the War Office to employ a thousand Maltese in Cyrenaica. The British Government has also promised to send an expert to survey the whole economic position of Malta. This promise will offset the announcement that British food subsidies to Malta are not to be continued, a withdrawal of help which forces Dr. Schembri Adami, Minister of Health, to seek elsewhere the funds for his Maltese national health scheme. But the whole problem goes deeper than dockyard employment and food subsidies. Last May, Dr. Colombo, the Finance Minister, made a statement that the Colonial Office must have taken to heart. His facts were that Malta and Gozo have a population of 300,000, which annually increases by 8,000, and is diminished by the emigration of considerably less than half that number. By 1952 the War Damage grants from Great Britain, totalling £30,000,000, will have been spent, and as a result the National Income will fall from £18,500,000 yearly to £15,000,000. Present income just about supports present population. What will happen in 1952 when income suddenly drops and population has so catastrophically risen?

To begin with, Malta must be the military base of some Great Power, or starve; and it is hard to imagine that any Power would want to lay out more money on Malta as a base than Great Britain now spends. For the Admiralty, let it be said that, even after the 1,200 dockers have been dismissed, the dockyard will still be employing many more men than before the war. There were good wages to be earned on the recent building of palatial new billets at the Luga airfield. Mr. Mintoff complains bitterly that Great Britain has failed to honour Mr. Churchill's promise that Malta would be repaid "every penny" of war damage and that the grant of £30,000,000 was niggardly. Still, many Maltese admit that, as Minister of Works, Mr. Mintoff spent the grant extravagantly, sometimes on projects by no means to be classed as repair of war damage. Yet however rightly one may condemn Mr. Mintoff for loosely bandying about slogans like "Malta's right to Marshall Aid," the islands will need outside help if their economy is not to collapse in misery within ten years. What emphatically will not happen is a decline or even a standstill in population. This is a Catholic island.

Emigration is the urgent need. Australia is taking some Maltese, whose passages are assisted by the Valetta Government; but the Australians restrict their quotas, and they take too much of the most skilled labour. Malta's population must be thinned out drastically. A reasonable programme would be the emigration of 14,000 a year until 1952, and after that of 7,000 a year indefinitely. The Maltese are no longer welcome in Egypt, whither they used to flock; but many of them feel that they could found a second homeland on Libyan soil. Maltese businessmen are at present trying to import more foodstuffs and livestock from Tripolitania; but both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica appear to the Maltese less as larders than as relatively empty countries where their own farming and building genius could be employed. The Arabs, and Uno, of course, also come into this picture. But somewhere the Maltese must go.

There is much, indeed, that they can do at home. Their soil is not so much infertile as ill watered, and the true need is for modern dams and reservoirs rather than more rain. Malta's market gardens and, possibly, her vineyards, might be expanded with profit. The success of the Simonds-Fassons-Cisk breweries has shown that there is room for the development of some light industries. Too much inactive capital is tied up in Malta; and the Maltese make skilled and conscientious craftsmen. A bigger *entrepôt* trade might be captured by equipping the harbours with more modern facilities. The chances of making of Malta a really flourishing tourist resort seem less bright. The distance from the British Isles, and the unpleasant scirocco weather of late summer are the snags here. In any case, agriculture, industry, the dockyard, the airfields and the tourist trade will never bring Malta to a satisfactory economic condition unless Great Britain helps the islanders to tackle wholeheartedly the emigration question. This is the reality which strengthens the case of Mr. Mintoff.

SO THEY SAY . . .

AN occasion such as the two-day debate last week on the economic situation exposes in all its inadequacy the present press coverage of Parliamentary proceedings. That this is mainly due to lack of space is undeniable; but does it justify the *Daily Mail's* compression of the Prime Minister's winding-up speech of some 2,800 words into three inches, or the *Daily Herald's* dismissal of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (172 inches in *Hansard*) in one and a half inches? True, the main points of most speeches were included in the "lead," but in most cases this was such a deft mixture of quotation, comment, and "atmosphere" that it was no substitute for straight reports of the speeches.

In the first day's debate the main speakers were Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Eden. In *Hansard*, Cripps's speech occupied 190 inches, and Mr. Eden's 144, with the total of Opposition speeches slightly exceeding those for the Government. *The Times* gave Cripps 110 inches, Mr. Eden 39; the total allotted to the Government was 115 inches, and to the Opposition 50. The *Manchester Guardian* gave Cripps 66 inches, Mr. Eden 26, only another 3 inches to other pro-Government speakers and another 17 inches to the Opposition. The *Daily Telegraph* gave Cripps 67 inches (in narrower columns), Mr. Eden 23—altogether 70 inches to the Government and 32 to the Opposition.

In the "popular" dailies the disparity became more marked. The *Express, Mail, Graphic* and *News Chronicle* all gave Eden and the Opposition slightly more space than Cripps and the Government (the *Express*: Eden 27 inches, Cripps 16), while the *Mirror* gave the Government 21 inches and the Opposition 6. The *Daily Herald* gave Cripps 26 inches—twenty times its meagre ration for Eden.

On the second day there were four main speakers—Sir John Anderson, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Attlee. In *Hansard* the longest speech was Morrison's (136 inches), followed by Churchill's (104), Anderson's (80), and finally Attlee's (56 inches). *The Times* gave Morrison 25 inches, Churchill 40, Anderson 18, and Attlee 24. The *Manchester Guardian* gave Morrison 33 inches, Churchill 30, Anderson 20, and Attlee 4—and that only in their "lead." The *Telegraph* gave Morrison 22 inches, Churchill 40, Anderson 14, and Attlee 18.

The *Daily Mail* concentrated, for some reason, on Sir John Anderson, giving him 20 inches, whereas Churchill got only 7, Morrison 10, and Attlee 4. The *Express*, on the other hand, left Anderson right out, gave Churchill 29 inches, Attlee a good showing with 22, but Morrison only 8. The *News Chronicle* disproportionately gave Churchill 28 inches, Anderson 6, Attlee 7, and Morrison, who made the longest speech, only 6.

Although pro-Government speeches occupied rather more than half as much space again in *Hansard* as those for the Opposition, the only papers to reflect anything like this proportion were *The Times* (in inches, 63: 40), the *Daily Herald* (51: 29), the *Daily Mirror* (16: 11), and the *Daily Worker* (16: 8). The Opposition were given a disproportionate amount of space in the *Daily Telegraph* (56 inches to the Government's 42), the *Manchester Guardian* (57: 42), the *News Chronicle* (34: 13), the *Daily Mail* (31: 15), the *Daily Graphic* (35: 24), and, to a lesser degree, the *Daily Express* (30: 30).

Apart from political considerations, however, the most telling commentary on the space problem is provided by the fact that for this two-day debate, as fully reported as any, *The Times* could only find room for approximately 9 per cent of the total number of words spoken, the *Manchester Guardian* for 7 per cent, the *Telegraph* for 6 per cent, the *Daily Graphic, News Chronicle, Daily Express*, and *Daily Herald* for 3 per cent, and the *Daily Mail, Daily Mirror*, and *Daily Worker* for only 2 per cent.

AUTOLYCUS

ILLUSION

WHEN we first looked into the church, they were just beginning the decorations for the Fiesta. One man, high up on a most insecure ladder, was draping a blue brocade flounce fringed with gold along the top of a great framework of white silk over the high altar. Another was ruching white muslin with pins in exquisite ruffles round the edge of the framework. A third man, on the ground, had a long blue pole with two iron hoops nailed to it near the top; over these he stretched some coarse linen, and on to that he pinned white muslin in elegant ruching, so that soon it began to look like a huge tiara. "They must be going to tie a figure to the pole, and that's its crown," we explained to each other.

The man doing the blue and gold drapery hadn't got it quite right—there was a piece with no gold fringe on the edge; so he shouted a couple of words and let down a rope, and the

man on the ground tied a couple of lengths of fringe to it. Up it went, rasping over the marble altar and pattering against the ladder, and was soon pinned on in place. As he reached out to tweak down the brocade into the proper festoons, the decorator assumed the attitude of an angel on a baroque monument—one leg twined through the ladder, the other stretched out sideways to balance his uplifted arms. His clothes, however, were not angelic or baroque; he wore a filthy pair of trousers and a torn shirt with a dark patch of sweat in the small of his back.

When we came back two days later, the church had been completely transformed into a gorgeous rococo theatre. The blue brocade which we had seen going up before was all but hidden. In front of it were fold on fold of crimson hangings lined with white velvet, fringed with gold and looped up with golden ropes. Inside the white ruched arch over the altar were the things which we had taken for mitres on poles—now, in place, they appeared as perfect acanthus capitals to fluted pillars made by straight perpendicular folds of white stuff. Within that again were transparent blue hangings, and a cherub-infested gold bracket was just being unceremoniously hauled up over the altar by a swarm of youths in gym shoes, to support the figure of the Madonna which would be placed in this blue boudoir during the Fiesta.

On the day itself we watched the Madonna carried round the streets in a shambling procession of fuchsia-robed priests, sallow little girls got up as brides, lurching banners, heavy-eyed bandsmen in creased uniforms of mustard yellow, and little boys in lace surplices. The procession bunched and sidled towards the sea; paused obligingly for a spectacled Swede with a formidable camera to photograph it; streamed on board a garlanded schooner which presently proved to have gone aground; and finally wavered back to the church through the gathering darkness, through which glowed its gorgeous colours, its candles and starry copes and jewelled images.

They carried the Madonna backwards into the church and, setting her down, proceeded to swathe her in fold on fold of white linen wrappings like a mummy, till only her pretty insipid little Winterhalter face and her halo of stars showed. A nimble rout of young men clambered on to the altar and hauled the swaddled figure into place, high on the golden pedestal in the alcove of blue and white hangings. They took off her wrappings, shook out her blue satin cloak, and with the help of a man on the floor of the church got her absolutely in the centre—with the exact gestures of an umpire giving middle and off to a batsman. And there she stood, still slightly crumpled, in the soft radiance of candle-light, with diaphanous blue veils as of distant sky behind her, and a firmament of crimson and gold magnificence over her head. "Stage design excellent, but production poor" said my companion as we turned to go.

Here in England we put the preservation of the illusion above almost everything in these performances. A procession must move with the punctual unhurrying certainty of the stars in their courses—which means years of training and rehearsal for everyone involved, from the Royalty in the landau to the private soldier lining the route. Nothing must shatter the spell of the theatrical scene—if a piece of the scenery comes away in the actor's hand, he must gag to make it seem no accident, but part of the play; if his family have just been wiped out by a bus or his leading lady has just insulted him in the wings, he must show no sign—The Show Must Go On.

I believe this to be a purely English phenomenon. Continental performers and spectators have no particular feelings about the preservation of the illusion—*prime donne* will break off to have a spitting match across the stage, which the audience will thoroughly enjoy and which will not at all impair their emotional and intellectual response to the ladies' singing before and after the incident. It is the nature of English theatrical illusion to annihilate all consciousness not concerned with the dramatic action; but Austrian or Italian theatrical illusion encloses the complete consciousness, and allows the spectator to see the Madonna being hauled about done up in a parcel without, apparently, arousing any sense of incongruity or bathos. I once saw the English school of thought perfectly illustrated by a *tour de force* of Sir Laurence Olivier's; the best example of the Continental one is the well-known story of Leo Slezak in "Lohengrin."

The former occasion was in a performance of "Richard III" at the height of the flying bomb period. The illuminated sign below the stage saying "Raid in Progress" had clicked on some time before; the nagging drone of the V.1.s had already been scrawling across the background of our attention for the length of an act; but hardly anybody had left the theatre. We were absorbed, enclosed, in the catastrophe of evil which was gathering to its fall on the night before Bosworth. Now Olivier, crooked and writhing like the "bottled spider" of Queen Margaret's execration, was working up to the climax of a lost soul's torment at—"Perjury, perjury in the high'st degree."

Behind his voice was the rising whine of an approaching flying bomb; it seemed to be making direct for the New Theatre. At—"I shall despair. There is no creature loves me"—the engine of the flying bomb suddenly cut out, apparently just overhead. Olivier's voice, pitched to be heard above the noise of the approaching bomb, sounded startlingly loud in the sudden silence; but he neither faltered, nor even made too sudden a transition to a lower pitch, as he went on: "And if I die, no soul will pity me." The imminent menace overhead was wiped out from our emotional consciousness by the spell of a perfectly controlled voice. Nothing, not even a bomb, can be allowed to prevent the English Show From Going On.

But in Vienna they think differently. Slezak was once singing in "Lohengrin" and had reached the point where the magic swan comes sweeping on to carry him away. It came sweeping on indeed; by some mechanical mishap, it swept across the stage and right off again into the wings before Slezak could mount it. He made no attempt to pretend it hadn't happened, but strolled to the footlights and said to the conductor, in a whisper so pitched as to be clearly audible to the whole opera house—"When does the next swan go?"

It is perhaps impossible for those whose imaginations have been conditioned by the centripetal illusion to surrender entirely to the centrifugal one. The English tourist at the Fiesta, noticing with a superior smile that the acolytes are wearing sand-shoes, that there is a gunmetal watch pinned to the Madonna's robe, and that the Little Sisters of the Annunciation are marching out of step, retires to his hotel, gets out the well-bound books he has brought with him, and conveys himself into a world of invulnerable illusion, whose well-proportioned towers and polished battlements no incongruities of real life can assail. But as he turns the last page, clicks off the bedside light, and settles down to a darkness loud with cicadas, he may perhaps wonder faintly if he has missed something.

J. C. FENNESSY

The Arts and Entertainment

THE CONDUCTOR PROBLEM

POLITICAL and Economic Planning, a body which seems to enjoy being called by the vulgar equivalent PEP, have produced a valuable survey of English musical life*. The material has been assembled at Dartington Hall by Messrs. Cox and Crossley-Holland, along lines laid down by a small committee consisting of David Webster, Frank Howes, Thomas Russell and Michael Tippett. The result is thorough, and appears sensible; the Report provides an indispensable mass of information about the financial and administrative background of English music-making, and does not hesitate, where necessary, to suggest improvements or remedies. Of course, many of the weaknesses in our musical life (for instance, the lack of concert halls) are all too familiar; but there are others which receive less attention. One to which the present authors return again and again is the inadequacy of the arrangements for training professional musicians, particularly in the more advanced and specialised categories. Our musical training is piecemeal and haphazard, and the time is ripe for its complete overhaul. The authors would like a national body to be made responsible for the organisation and development of musical training throughout the country; and this proposal will be strongly resisted by the leading institutions, who are jealous of their independence. The latter's case would be stronger if they had shown less complacency in the past. "The prestige of the two Royal Schools in London suffered severely," the authors justifiably remark, "when so little attempt was made before the war to secure the services of the few great Continental teachers who found in this country temporary refuge from political persecution." There are many points into which a national body might profitably inquire. Why are our young singers so poorly trained? Where are the talented new conductors?

The problem of the conductor is perhaps the most serious of all. The shortage of first-rate English material has produced a vicious circle: what our aspirants most need is practical experience, but there is obvious risk in appointing the inexperienced to leading positions. Two important appointments have thus recently fallen to conductors of foreign birth: Covent Garden to Karl Rankl, and Bournemouth to Rudolf Schwarz. Of the two choices, the second provoked the louder objections: it is admitted that we lack operatic experience, but surely an Englishman could have been found for a straightforward orchestral post? The Bournemouth Corporation, however, stuck to their guns. Possessed of a fine new hall, and determined to rebuild their famous orchestra (shrunken by war-time economies) into a first-class ensemble, they were convinced that they had found in Mr. Schwarz the ideal trainer and director. They gave him a free hand, and he has repaid their confidence by a series of highly enterprising programmes: in the last two years the orchestra has given some eighty first performances, and few programmes without an English work. As for standards of performance, the critics were invited to test them at a pair of concerts given a fortnight ago to celebrate the 57th anniversary of the orchestra's foundation.

I heard the second of these two concerts, at which Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick gave a brilliant account of Lennox Berkeley's two-piano concerto; the main orchestral items were two symphonies, Haydn's 95th in C minor, and Dvorak's 3rd in F. The orchestra showed itself to be a finely-tempered instrument with a character of its own, its particular virtue being the solid, well-balanced chording of wood-wind and brass, and the long bowing and comfortable sonority of the

* *Music: A Report on Musical Life in England. Published on behalf of the Arts Enquiry by PEP.* 15s.

strings; these qualities are helped by the considerable resonance of the hall. Mr. Schwarz allows his left hand to oscillate in a ceaseless demand for flexibility, and this habit sometimes impedes the rhythmic articulation; but the Dvorak Symphony received a model performance. This was one of the most enjoyable orchestral concerts I have heard for some time; it was difficult to realise that it was the result of barely two years' work.

I dare say there are students now at our schools with as much potential talent as the young Rudolf Schwarz; what they lack is the long ladder of opportunity open to every gifted German or Austrian boy. At the age of 18 Schwarz went to Düsseldorf as youngest assistant to Georg Szell; from 1927 to 1933 he shared with Josef Krips the conductorship of the Karlsruhe Opera; under Hitler his career was eclipsed, and in 1945 he was released by British troops from the concentration camp at Belsen. Apart from that last hideous episode, it is the usual career of the Central European conductor; closely parallel, in fact, to that of Karl Rankl. But I doubt if Dr. Rankl's warmest supporter would claim that he has been as successful at Covent Garden as Mr. Schwarz has been at Bournemouth. Obviously, the difficulties that face Dr. Rankl are far greater; the mere provision of opera for six nights a week on the Covent Garden scale is by itself something of an achievement. But after nearly three years' experience of the new régime at Covent Garden, the impression persists that there is something deeply unlyrical about Dr. Rankl's approach to music: his choice of singers is often curiously insensitive, and he betrays a marked preference for strong accentuation and furious tempi, and a marked indifference to what the Germans call *Klangschönheit* (the beauty of sheer tone for its own sake). The prestige of Toscanini has had a harmful effect, I sometimes feel, on operatic conducting; in the concert hall it may be all right to aim at a superhuman tension, but in the theatre it is more useful to create the impression of calm, ease and unhurried flow: the sort of impression for which Richter was famous, and Karl Muck, and in our own day Richard Strauss and Bruno Walter.

Lack of confidence was distressingly evident in last week's revival of *Der Rosenkavalier*. The orchestral playing was thoroughly bad, the woodwind in particular coming a whole series of croppers (to name one, the long flute cadenza which precedes the Italian tenor's aria). It is difficult to be sure how much of the confusion was due to inadequate rehearsal, how much to failure of confidence, and how much to the activities of the unnamed producer (Joan Cross's name has been dropped from the programme, and the opera is merely said to have been "rehearsed" by Percy Heming). Whatever the cause, the Annina was often at sea, and actually failed to enunciate her crucial "*Ecco!*" (after Valzacchi's) at the climax of the second act; in the first act, before the entrance of Ochs, there was no noise whatsoever behind the scenes (except for an inappropriately declaimed sentence from the Haushofmeister), so that the audience must have wondered what is was that the Marschallin found so agitating. Like most of the other principals, Sylvia Fisher was new to the part, which she sang with beautiful tone and a grave attention to detail; she seemed a little surprised (as well she might be) by the goings-on in her house, but when once she has got the hang of the whole complicated *qui-pro-quo*, she will doubtless introduce the note of lightness and gaiety which is at present missing from her sweet and serious impersonation. About the new Ochs, Howell Glynne, I am not so sure; though vocally an improvement on his predecessor, he is too gloomy, he booms away with too little light and shade, and his make-up and behaviour are too gross: already in the first act, he has begun to push back his wig and reveal a bald head. Strauss may have been exaggerating when he said that Ochs should be "a rustic beau of 35," but the phrase should not be forgotten. Erna Berger (as Sophie) deserves great credit for her mastery of English, but her voice was not at its freshest. The best performance came from Constance Shacklock, who has thoroughly thought out the part of Oktavian, looked dashing and sang well.

If *Der Rosenkavalier* is a complex and difficult opera, so too is *Don Giovanni;* but Sadler's Wells showed a happier touch with Mozart than Covent Garden with Strauss. James Robertson handled the score with easy lyrical grace; and Geoffrey Dunn had so planned his production as to clarify the action and concentrate our attention on the music. I have only one fault to find with this skilful and sensible producer: after a finely tense opening, he never quite recaptured the note of romantic terror. In the churchyard, Leporello (Edmund Donlevy) seemed only to play at being frightened, and when the statue arrived for supper, he had to push his way along a passage into a low-ceilinged and brightly-lit buttery, in which he made the effect of an unusually loquacious Arctic explorer. It must be added that Stanley Clarkson sang the part monumentally, and that Tanya Moiseiwitsch's sets are otherwise effective and occasionally beautiful. Frederick Sharp made a very fair attempt on the Don, and Victoria Sladen was an arresting Donna Anna—though she allows herself a degree of dynamic variation within the phrase which is much too wide for Mozart. The most interesting performance came from Marjorie Shires, who made of Donna Elvira a real person, agitated, pathetic and intermittently inclined to boss; her singing was so accurate and accomplished that one regretted the omission of "Mi tradì."

* * *

The tragic end of Ginette Neveu and her brother recalls a similar disaster which overtook, not long since, the entire Ars Rediviva Ensemble; the more valuable your life, the more frequently you are obliged to entrust it to the air. She was a great violinist, conspicuous for fiery attack, a broad pulsing tone and a total absence of virtuoso fuss. Her platform stance was that of a man, and her interpretations of the German classics were controlled by a powerful intelligence; but her range of sympathy was wide, and in the Sibelius concerto (of which she has left a fine recording) she was unforgettable.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

CONGREVE, declared Dr. Johnson, formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, supposing it to consist in gay remarks and unexpected answers. The same may be said of Wilde, the way of whose world is Congreve's *Oscarisé*. Listening to *A Woman of No Importance*, I was conscious of the gay remarks and unexpected answers, and also of the daunting void into which they were delivered. Tragedy requires that we be mute, comedy surprises us into laughter. The ghost of Wilde, surveying the felted walls and matted floors, traversing the grey uniformity of the studios—dispeopled laboratories, prisons, torture-chambers of the Word—would it not murmur: *Le silence éternel de ces espaces m'effraie*? In the present case the players heartened each other by indicating their own mild amusement at the dialogue. Their laughter was restrained—perhaps as a tribute to the high life of Hunstanton Chase—and on the whole I felt that they might have left it to me, whose yelps of glee, if infrequent, were uninhibited. The cutting of the text for a modest seventy-five minutes' production raises another problem. Ought the blue pencil, thus pressed, to have hunted out so much of what most dates, thus obscuring the unholy alliance of Wilde's individual wit with the sentimental morality and theatrical rhetoric *de rigueur* in his time?

In Jean Dutourd's *L'Arbre*, admirably translated by Lothian Small and E. J. King Bull, five characters in conversation hold the air for an hour and three-quarters, assisted only by a little thunder as the sublunary world first groans beneath the divine malediction. In Dutourd's garden Eve eats her Apple to save Adam from the unhappiness which must result from his bad habit of thinking. It is this bad habit, indeed, that has created the Tree on which the Apple grows; the more Adam thinks the more the Tree of the Thoughts of Adam burgeons; and if Lucifer is now at large this is because the Tree's roots have disturbed the very rocks beneath which the Creator had designed to keep him pinned. (This last fancy has particularly pleased the author: he brings it in twice.) To be serious without pomposity, witty without strain, intelligent without ambition of profundity: it seems so simple when an able young Frenchman is on the job. The playing here was very good indeed.

When Rayner Heppenstall portrays a city, let thwarted Hellenic Travellers, prodigals bankrupt of foreign exchange, and the supra-Baedeker class in general confidently tune in. How unlike that other universe above the line in the *Radio Times*! Here too, it is true, as with Dick Barton, aeroplanes roar, engines puff, gears clash and sea gulls scream as we move about Europe. But here if foreigners talk in broken English it is because they *are* talking in broken English. And others talk in real German (plenty of it) and real French (Count Thoranc, perhaps, who so irritated Johann Kaspar Goethe?) A little Wagner, a little Heine, a fleeting reference to Hölderlin, and—for contrast?—the screams and pants of a group of ladies engaged in all-in wrestling: how delightful it all is! Now broadly and now subtly evoked, Frankfort rises irresistibly around us. We nod and beck at each other across the fire-place, gleefully sharing small recognitions, allusions triumphantly caught. But who is the old man? It must be Goethe, don't you think—Goethe in old age? Otherwise, what's the point? But *is* it? Fortunately we have not to commit ourselves on the point in print.

A. J. P. Taylor is the Third's fireside wonder. He stumps in on us, picks with an unerring eye the most comfortable chair, leans back and talks. Really *talks*—on Benjamin Constant or whatever. The fellow, you say, is putting on a turn? Well, yes. But still it is as a good talker does that. The illusion is perfect. At any moment we expect him to lean forward and make free with the poker. Robert Birley, second Reith Lecturer, is different. He has no designs on the poker. He can scarcely be said to sit down. Without doing so, can any broadcaster make us sit up? MICHAEL INNES

MISS CLOUGH AND MISS McCANNELL

ACCORDING to the catalogue, the present exhibition at Roland, Browse and Delbanco's in Cork Street is Prunella Clough's first one-man show. The information is surprising, in the first place, because her painting is so familiar; but also because it is so mature. Apparently, a few good pictures in the mixed shows can exert real pressure, preparing us most effectively for the full broadside when it comes. Broadside, though, is hardly the word for evoking the quality of this excellent exhibition. Nothing could be calmer or—almost—more self-effacing than these truly accomplished paintings of still life (an aubergine; a cauliflower; a skull; or two oar-blades which at first sight combine with something else to create a phantom seagull) or of fishermen; shadowy yet firm, substantial; crystalline in their abstract, straight-edged flatness, yet *real*, looming solid and human among the fading planes of drying nets. In all these paintings great delicacy of vision (the selection and arrangement of her subjects), no less than of execution (her texture is remarkably refined), never leads to the feeling that superlative "good taste" has itself become the artist's main objective (whether consciously or unconsciously does not matter). Perhaps this was a possible criticism of Miss Clough's work of a year or two back—that her workmanlike, technical prowess was in excess of her imaginative power and resulted, therefore, in a slight sense of vacancy, albeit an exquisite vacancy.

But now the carefully plotted design, based so tensely on the actual, recordable configuration of things *seen*, has filled out. "Texturing" is absent, while texture remains the natural property of each object depicted. The good taste is deepened at every stage by an unshowy but very

evident seriousness. This seriousness it is that leads her away all the time from the easy to the difficult. There is no sign of short cuts; she goes the hard way and doesn't jump, arbitrarily, from reality straight to abstraction. Her abstraction is condensed from her subject. She, almost alone in her "age-group" of British painters (the near-to-thirties), has this quality of organic cohesion: others are more inventive in a radical sense, but they, perhaps, are more summary or jerky as craftsmen.

Although they in no way approach the mastery of Miss Clough's, the latest paintings of Ursula McCannell, at Twenty Brook Street, are the most interesting she has exhibited since her precocious début at the Redfern before the war, when she was in her teens. From romantic line-drawings of groups of gypsies, which showed an admiration for Augustus John, to *The Bird-Seller*—one of the best paintings in this exhibition and very much in the lineage of Adler and Colquhoun—is certainly a transition. She has come to accept an economical all-over grid of design, with even white lines, in, for instance, *The Bird-Seller*, outlining, chopping up and relating the figure to its background. But in many of her paintings there lingers on a more unruly crowd of forms, usually involving a figure or groups of figures posed in dramatic, almost gesticulating, postures. In other words, with part of herself she still hankers after a grand, perhaps a Rococo, certainly Romantic, grouping: and it is, essentially, a grouping that ill submits to the sort of even, efficient distribution of surface emphases common to that section of the British school which Adler so decisively affected. She really wishes, one feels, to retain more plastic strength than the flat, heraldic Adler tradition will permit: in a far more complicated painting than *The Bird-Seller*, called *Woman Selling Fish*, she achieves a fusion of a plastic and a flat, heraldic design that is personal to herself.

PATRICK HERON

THE MOVIES

"The Search," at the Ritz
"Give Us This Day," at the Odeon

Some films—the well-timed documentary, for example, with a wide impact—belong so much to their time and place that we would not wish them revived. Especially, no doubt, is this so when our pity has been evoked. Who, remembering how he was once moved by *The Last Chance*—that urgent appeal against war and hatred—would not rebel at the mere notion of seeing it to-day? He (or she) would hurriedly say: "Agreed, agreed, of course I support all that, but I can't and won't at the moment *feel* it, unless you make me." The point with such a film is that the audience must meet it halfway. So I found myself reflecting, a little uncomfortably, as I came away from *The Search*, a film initiated by the same producer, with aims even less resistible.

Its theme, the reclamation of children unparented and devitalised in Nazi prison camps, must immediately claim the sympathies of every sane person. They arrive, the children, in lorry loads at an Unrra centre: they parade, as they have been forced to do so often, they are questioned, given a limited freedom, made to play, tempted out of apathy by food and kindness. One, who will reply only "*Ich weiss nicht*," has a long number tattooed on his arm: the mark of Auschwitz. Travelling with others in a Red Cross lorry which they take to be a death-van, he escapes, and is befriended by an American soldier. He begins to talk, to laugh; he learns for the first time what a mother is. And his mother, who has been trailing from camp to camp in search of her lost child, at last finds him. How is it that this film, realistically conceived and choosing for its actors those who experienced such sufferings, can possibly fail at all of its effect? (The film, directed by Fred Zinnemann, has a few professional actors—Montgomery Clift and Aline MacMahon among them—whose performances are perfectly in tune.)

Yet, to my mind, *The Search* does just a little

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Because you read this paper, it can be taken for granted that you are interested in this country's future and want to see how we can have, at one and the same time, more freedom, more social progress, and more economic prosperity. You want to look beyond day-to-day political issues, and to be able to see what is coming for good or ill, and what can be done to further the good things and to avert the evil.

That sort of looking ahead is the FABIAN SOCIETY'S business—and has been ever since it was founded 65 years ago. The Webbs and Bernard Shaw built it up, as they created the *New Statesman* later on, for that very purpose; and now, with many Fabian ideas being put into practice, we need to take a fresh standpoint and look on ahead once more as the early Fabians did. The Fabian Society can take pride in having prepared the way for many policies, once regarded as utopian, that have now become solid fact. But fresh problems have arisen, especially as the evil legacy of two world wars; and the same sort of fundamental thinking as was put into FABIAN ESSAYS in 1889 is needed now more than it ever was. Whether the subject be local government, democracy in industry or any other topic in the main stream of Fabian thought, the Society's programme of work is designed to supply this fundamental thinking and to assess the most recent experience.

This space, given to the Society by the *New Statesman & Nation* for that end, is an appeal to you to join the Fabian Society and, if you can, to work for it as well and to support it generously. The Society's main work is *research*; and research, as everyone knows, is a costly business, even when a great deal of help is being given free. Our job as Fabians is to think well ahead of current political programmes, so as to be ready and well-informed as new issues arise. Our job is not to make a case, but to study facts and trends as objectively as we can, to inform all who will listen, and to offer our ideas to anyone who will take them up. There is no other basis on which real research work can be properly carried on.

Thus, while the Fabian Society has been affiliated to the Labour Party ever since the Labour Party was born, we have never been merely part of the Labour Party, or under any compulsion to agree with it. Our full members are, and always have been, Socialists; but beyond insisting that our Socialism is "democratic," we leave them to define the word for themselves. Moreover, we welcome as Associates many persons who do not call themselves Socialists, but are interested in our work and want to be sure of getting the information we supply. We have always tried to keep the Fabian Society clear from all taint of narrowness or dogmatism.

That is why we adopted what we call our "self-denying ordinance". The Fabian Society runs no candidates, puts forward no resolutions, lays down no creed. It encourages its members to undertake objective research; and it publishes the results, provided that the work is competent, without asking itself whether it agrees with them or not. Our numerous Research Pamphlets and books are all issued under the names of individuals or groups, so as not to commit the Society as a whole. There is a Fabian *approach*; but there is no such thing as a Fabian *orthodoxy*.

The particular reason why we have launched this appeal just now is that we are in serious financial difficulties, mainly because there has been a huge fall in the larger donations on which we have had to rely for a part of our funds. This fall is due mainly to redistributive taxation; and we are far from regretting it. But it forces us to appeal, not only for substantial gifts from those who can still afford them, but also for a much bigger membership paying, say, two or three or five guineas a year, as the only means of giving us the assured basic income we must have if we are to get and hold a good staff with fair security of tenure. Our assured income is only £7,000 a year: we need at least £12,000, apart from special funds for big schemes of research. We ask you to do all you can to help us, if you think the sort of thing we are doing ought to be done in the national interest. We believe that, if it is not done, and politicians' attention is concentrated too much on short-term and too little on long-term issues, there are formidable perils ahead.

This applies not only to home policy, but also to international and colonial affairs, which are the special care of the Fabian International and Colonial Bureaux. It applies most of all to that fundamental thinking which must underlie all policies that are to stand the test of really trying times, such as the world is experiencing to-day.

Our past work has not been unfruitful; and, though our old leaders have gone from us, a new generation is ready to carry it on. Will you help us to ensure that what is needed gets done and that there is money enough to secure high standards and the independence without which good work cannot be carried out.

(Signed) G. D. H. Cole, *Chairman*. John Parker, *Vice-Chairman*. Ian Mikardo, *Treasurer*.
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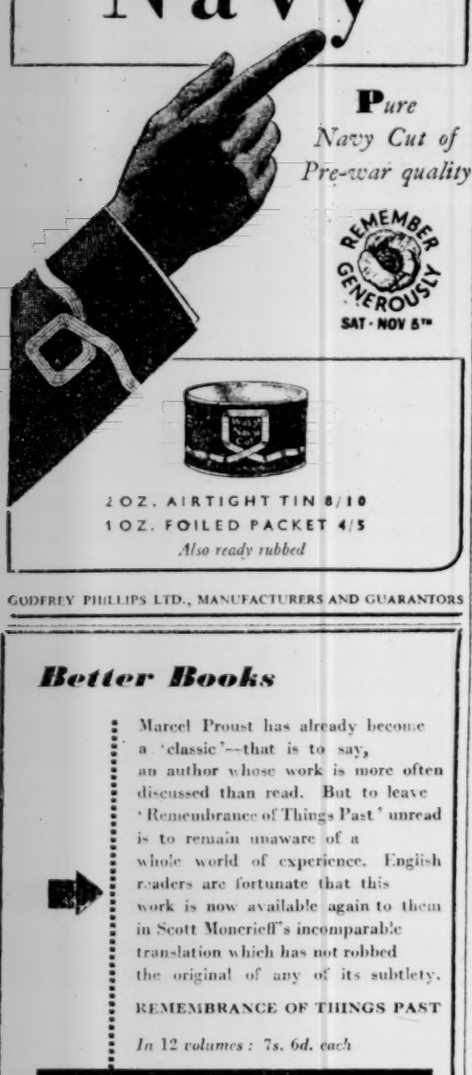

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fail, as *The Last Chance*, despite some amateurishness, did not. For one thing, it is addressed with lavish sentiment to American audiences for whom Auschwitz and Dachau are as remote as Chungking. The opening commentary shows us round with a really frightful insensitiveness. Then the children themselves, who so convincingly hint at their grim upbringing, are only made real up to a point: the point where sentimentality might shrink. No hint that any of them may have suffered to a degree which second helpings and a mother found won't easily cure; the little hero of the film (played with a wonderful charm by nine-year-old Ivan Jandl) has merely to be coaxed out of his fears, taught the elements of American, and caught in his mother's embrace, to be right as rain. Now, I don't say that a film which has made an appeal among other things for funds, can escape some sentimentality of the kind; but *The Search* is remarkable enough to make one wish it could have done better: either delved deep or been content with a brisk "March of Time" treatment. However, this is a complaint few of my fellow-critics seem to share.

Give Us This Day is hardly less notable a reconstruction: its picture of Italian bricklayers, a Brooklyn marriage, the struggle against poverty, unemployment, and risk was directed by Edward Dmytryk, an "un-American" refugee, and filmed in an English studio. This product of exile may seem to us as American as *The Grapes of Wrath* or *The Ox-Bow Incident*, and it has been inspired by much the same feeling, a recurrent one (thank heaven) in the cradle of plenty. On the side of realism, *Give Us This Day* is up to a point remarkable; and might even have carried the sensational ironies of the novel *Christ in Concrete*, from which it derives, if it weren't for a poeticising streak that pours out rudimentary blank verse and bogs the characters long before the hero disappears in a bath of cement. As it is the first half grips beautifully, with performances by Sam Wanamaker, Lea Padovani and others that are the more pleasing for their fresh faces.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

"Before the Party," at St. Martins

Mr. Rodney Ackland has turned Somerset Maugham's bitter anecdote into a one-act play and, himself, has written a second act which might be called *After the Party*. The original story was a statement of a situation and, although the members of the conventional family, who discover their daughter is a murderess, obviously have further problems to sort out when the story ends, these problems are irrelevant to the story. Mr. Ackland's second act is a failure because, artistically, it is unnecessary. Mr. Maugham knew that there was no point of sympathy in his story and, as he handled it, this did not matter; the *bourgeois* family, concerned for their name rather than for their daughter's happiness, the daughter herself murdering her husband because he drank and because he "let her down"—they can never demand our sympathy. But in a full-length play something of this sort is necessary, and here we go from character to character in search of somebody with whom we may think and feel; eventually we find this in the little girl (Mr. Ackland's own brilliant contribution) who overhears her sister's confession to the murder and is obsessed with thoughts of hell-fire and damnation. Mr. Ackland's other important contribution is a *fiancé* for the murderess, who is finally found to be acceptable to the family when they discover he is heir to a barony. The cheap cynicism of this ending is something which Mr. Maugham would never stoop to, and, though he has no love for the upper middle-classes he would not so unremittingly as Mr. Ackland have thrust home the idea that such families are snobbish, petty, dishonest, uncharming and ridiculous. And how, with his experience of the stage, could he have given us yet another of those twittering, ineffectual Billie Burkeish mothers? Miss Margaret Barton, as the little sister, was unceasingly good, but Miss Constance Cummings, as the murderess, had her moments only towards the end of the second act.

Correspondence

WHITE SOUTH AFRICA

SIR,—I have just seen in your issue of October 1, a letter from one E. H. V. Clark, of Johannesburg, expressing resentment of your criticisms of the Union Government's Native policy. While I and many others disapprove totally of the views expressed in that letter, most of us South Africans feel that your criticism shows a certain misconception of the attitude of even those who dislike the policy of the present Government.

Most South Africans, whatever their party views, hold that Native policy must be based on two principles.

The first is the principle of racial individuality: that is, the right of each of the four communities of South Africa—Whites, Cape Coloured, Bantu and Indians—to survival as a distinct people, with its own culture, language and way of living. This implies the express rejection of any idea of the fusion of the four peoples into one—in other words, of the absorption of the other three peoples into the Bantu mass—and this in turn entails opposition both to miscegenation itself and to anything likely to lead to miscegenation, such as the mingling of races on familiar terms in social life.

The second principle is that of White ascendancy, which we regard as the indispensable condition for the performance of the White man's function as guardian and propagator of the values embodied in Western civilisation. We do not derive this claim to ascendancy from any belief in the innate superiority of one race over another, but hold that it arises out of the function, which in turn arises out of the fact that the majority of the population of South Africa are still in the state of barbarism. To establish full equality under such conditions would mean transferring power to the uncivilised majority and thus entrusting the fate of civilisation to people who have not as yet accepted it. And if a civilised and an uncivilised man are really equal, what is the meaning of civilisation?

Our task must obviously be to uphold in our own lives and policy the civilised values for which we stand, and at the same time to raise the other communities to a level at which White ascendancy will become superfluous and equality, in the form of some sort of federation of races, will be possible. This entails the spread of Native education, already far more extensive in the Union than anywhere else in Africa, and also the training of Natives for self-government.

CHARLES OULD

Cape Town.

WAGES AND PROFITS

SIR,—Your correspondent, T. E. W. Waddington, while accusing you of misleading propaganda, himself gives only half the facts. He produces figures to show that wages have risen more than distributed profits, in an attempt to show that those who live by company profits have made a greater sacrifice than the wage earners. It is true that since 1938 wages have risen proportionately more than profits; but that does not mean to say that the rentiers and coupon clippers have sacrificed proportionately more.

In 1938 private savings totalled £143 million, mainly from rentier sources; in 1948 they were only £6 million. The difference has gone to maintain the rentiers' standard of living.

If even this were the whole picture, Mr. Waddington might have the vestige of a case. He could show, perhaps, that the community needed this saving to produce its new capital investment, and that the only way to restore it would be to distribute more profits to the coupon clipper. But, in fact, he has his saving done for him by the companies he owns. Company savings from undistributed profits have risen from £170 million in 1938 to £545 million in 1948, thus immensely raising the value of privately owned capital. This has been possible only because the share of company profits in the national income has gone up, having more than trebled, while the national income has little more than doubled.

SOCIALIST

RETRENCHMENT

SIR,—There have been frequent references recently in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION to its contemporary the *Economist*. Like, I expect, many of your subscribers, I read both journals. May I, therefore, be allowed to say that I think you have on more than one occasion accused the *Economist* of an attitude that it does not hold? For instance, in the issue of October 22 you say: "To the *Economist* . . . retrenchment has always meant a reduction in the workers' standard of living." It may be true that we are about to suffer a reduction in our living standards. For instance, the Chancellor, on October 4, at the Mansion House Dinner, said: "There will, of course, be some decrease in consumption due to the fact that the cost of living will rise without, we hope, any rise in personal incomes," but the *Economist* has made no such statement as this. What it has been saying for a long time is that if only the Government would pay attention to the efficiency of our economy, no reduction would have been necessary. A very different point of view.

The Davids, L. J. CADBURY
Northfield, Birmingham, 31.

TITO AND THE COMINFORM

SIR,—I am sorry if I too readily gave Brigadier Maclean credit for a view he says he does not hold.

A great deal of emphasis is being placed on the Partisans driving the Germans off Yugoslav soil—but Brigadier Maclean must know that this is not the same thing as liberating Yugoslavia single-handed. The Yugoslav campaign did not occur in isolation. It was the pressure being placed by the Red Army on the Germans elsewhere *at the same time* as the Partisans were active that was the decisive factor. Does Brigadier Maclean dispute this? Do even the Yugoslavs dispute it? Is history likely to dispute it?

Whether Churchill supported Tito in greater or less degree for tactical reasons seems to me beside the question. The point at issue is whether—apart from the immediate struggle with the Germans—Churchill had the deeper aim of re-conquering the Balkans and Eastern Europe for Western imperialism. Although this aim was not fulfilled, Churchill's choice of strategy during the war—highly significant even at the time (but explained away then in terms of military exigencies whose nature could not be revealed)—has now turned out to be just what it appeared; the action of a man whose alliance with the Russians (as with Tito) was tactical, and who never lost sight of his ultimate hope and dream—the restoration of his class and country to that position of unquestioned dominance which it had enjoyed in the days of his youth. L. G.

SIR,—Your journal has often referred recently to events in and around my country. I am sure, therefore, that your readers will be interested to learn about the latest manifestation of the Cominform campaign against Yugoslavia.

In common with other foreign journalists in Great Britain I applied for and received credentials to report the recent British Peace Congress organised in London by the British Peace Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. J. G. Crowther. The Yugoslav people, who lost 1,700,000 dead in the recent war, are naturally interested to learn of any manifestation of the desire for peace throughout the world.

However, on arrival at the hall, I was told by the Conference secretary that my news agency was prohibited because it was a "representative of the Yugoslav Government." I strongly denied this, but I was not allowed to report the Conference.

Quite apart from the question of etiquette in Press relations, an important point arises here. Is the "Peace movement" in Britain a broad movement in which all points of view can unite, or is it merely an organisation which must follow the dictates of the Cominform without question?

MILAN HOFFMAN,
London Correspondent of the Telegraphic Agency of New Yugoslavia
3 Queen's Gate, S.W.7.

CONTRACEPTIVES

SIR,—It is really rather astonishing how agitated sections of public opinion have become because in some places contraceptives have recently been made available for automatic machines. It is well known that this practice was quite common before the war but nothing was then done about them.

Many people however are always anxious to pass leglislation restricting other people's sexual activities and the Home Secretary has acted more quickly than the Government generally react to a problem; his by-law prohibiting the sale will no doubt be widely adopted.

I wish to point out, however, that it would be desirable if the Government showed the same alacrity in dealing with a more positive side of the problem. I am not aware that they have taken any action yet on paragraph 558 of the report of the Royal Commission on population which recommended as follows:—

> The giving of advice on contraception to married persons who want it should be accepted as a duty of the National Health Service, and the existing restrictions on the giving of such advice by public authority clinics should be removed. The initial duty to give advice should rest with the family doctor. Any clinics needed for this purpose should, wherever possible, be associated with the facilities we recommend for advice on infecundity. This branch of the National Health Service should be so designed as to allow for experimental development, as the needs emerge, for other activities (e.g., pre-marital examinations) of direct relevance to family welfare.

17 Victoria Street, S.W.1. R. S. W. POLLARD

SIDNEY WEBB

SIR,—In the interests of accuracy it might be worth while to quote the reference to Webb's speed of reading *Das Kapital* from Margaret Cole's *The Webbs and their Work*.

The passage is taken from Bernard Shaw's contribution. It runs: "I made him read Karl Marx after my own conversion. He probably got through the first volume of *Capital*, the only one then available, in an hour; for he was a miraculously quick reader." IVOR GOWAN

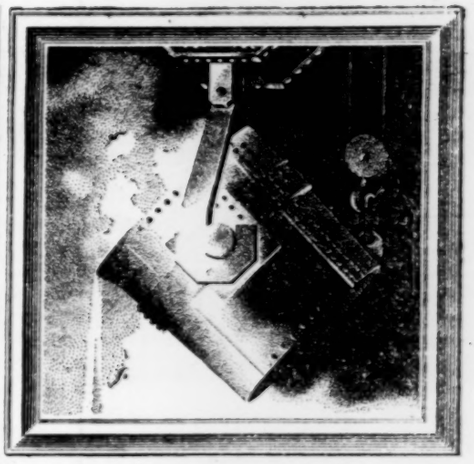
"Y.Y."

SIR,—Mr. Schofield can rest assured that the "Affable Hawk" has severely admonished Mr. MacCarthy for his bibliographically misleading aside concerning posthumous editions of Hazlitt's Essays.

With a view to leading up to a suggestion that a selection from Y.Y.'s published essays might well be included in some popular "library," I recalled that Hazlitt, to-day the most widely read of all English essayists, had to wait fifty years and more (how unnecessarily!) before his essays were sporadically reprinted. I ignored the two abortive attempts to publish complete editions of his works, that of his eldest son (12 vols.) issued between 1831 and 1851, and of W. C. Hazlitt (7 vols.) which began to appear in 1869. Presumably they were not sufficiently remunerative. What had impressed me was the fact that at the end of the 19th Century, while Lamb's essays were in print in various forms, in order to read Hazlitt one had to buy either first editions or those second-hand copies from twenty to fifty years old. They were cheap enough, but they had to be sought for. Then he began to appear in "Bohn's," "The World's Classics," "Everyman Library," etc., thanks, no doubt, to literary critics like Leslie Stephen, Saintsbury, Stevenson, having written about him in the Eighties and, although Saintsbury was not very enthusiastic, Hazlitt's radicalism antagonised him.

Moral: If good essayists like "Y.Y." and E. V. Lucas drop out of notice after they die, interest and appreciation may yet revive years later. I have been delighted to hear, by the way, since writing that article, that there is a chance that "Everyman" may possibly publish a representative selection from "Y.Y.'s" essays. It would keep his fame alive and be a benefit to the reading public.

DESMOND MACCARTHY



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BOOKS IN GENERAL

For more than a decade a large part of literary criticism has been given to a kind of social spade work, to bull-dozing, demolition and the opening up of old sites. Down in his trench this social critic of literature, indistinguishable from other workmen, has been swinging his pick at the foundations of art, and we have known him by the phrases he shovels up: words like *bourgeois*, the people, industrial revolution, capitalism, the machine, decline of religion, decline of civilisation, barbarism, intelligentsia, are planked down like vivid and unworkable lumps of clay. It is always exciting to see men at work, the operation has been absorbing to watch; but after the stimulus has passed, the reader, and the writer too, are left in a mood of uncertainty. Many of these critics are patently more interested in the sins of society than they are in the arts. It is hard to know, when they are working at new foundations, whether they are preparing for a new temple or a new prison; occasionally they may be digging their own graves. Like Mr. Graham Hough* the reader and the writer may wonder whether this kind of criticism is not hypnotised by a truism—"art is an expression of the ethos of the men and culture that produced it"—which has the virtue of relating literature to life but leaves all the crucial questions unasked. We are stuck in Genesis at the point of the Fall: everything interesting happened afterwards.

In *The Last Romantics*, which is a series of studies in the work of Ruskin, William Morris, Rossetti, Pater, the writers of the Nineties and Yeats, Mr. Graham Hough takes us back to the roots of modern social criticism in England. A conversible and subtle critic, well-read in nineteenth-century literature, full of ideas yet never distracted from his main purpose, he is able to show that social criticism itself is not an absolute. It began with Ruskin and is an aspect of the struggle of "the artist"—a word which took on its contemporary meaning only in the 1850's—to exact a place for the Romantic imagination in a greedy, materialistic, machine-using society. And here we have the theme of Mr. Hough's book: the last Romantics succeeded, but the machine always out-paced them. The example of Morris led to the unhappy products of the arts and crafts movement, even to poker work; it improved the designs of machine manufacture which he hated. In the end, in Yeats the Romantic is the emissary of a cryptic vision of final doom:

> . . . but now I know
> That twenty centuries of stony sleep
> Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle.
> And what rough beast, its hour come round at last
> Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

For their kind of mind, the problems of man and the machine were insoluble on a plane that could be called civilised. Emotionally, Mr. Hough says at one point, they were un-Roman. We enter upon the reign of the rough beast. Yeats died in 1939 and the situation, Mr. Hough thinks, has obviously deteriorated. Perhaps, in any foreseeable modern society, their problem was insoluble in any case. But let us go back, under Mr. Hough's guidance, to its origins and its history, not merely to clinch arguments, but to appreciate the complexity, the gains and losses of the Romantic struggle. And let us keep in mind the important fact that although, as he says, two main streams, one of science, positivism, radicalism and the other, antiquarian, traditional, conservative, divide the nineteenth century, they were frequently linked. The Romantic absorption in the Past, so remarkable in that time, is an expression of the unhappiness as well as the confidence of industrial society. Mr. Hough says the late Romantics like Ruskin and Morris visited the past as exiles from a lost paradise; whereas the earlier Romantics visited the past as tourists and spectators. But Browning and many others still leave the contrary impression that the mood could also be annexing, expansive as well as melancholy, a feeling that may even be detected in the bigoted Protestantism of Ruskin in his early travels. Up to the last quarter of the century we see them opening up colonies in the past; it becomes part of a great empire as well as part of the lost golden age—the imperial pageants, the romantic visits of oriental figures to the British Court might be regarded (and indeed were) as a romantic past appearing in the flesh in the streets of London to pay tribute—the relation with the Court of King Arthur, the Middle Ages and the Gothic seems to be imbued with the confident familiarities of free trade as much as with the spiritual longing to escape from contemporary reality. Half of Romance is assertion; it is not all "escape" or compensation and this ambiguity is in the programme of the last Romantics and their works. The Pre-Raphaelites succeeded, William Morris succeeded, but the meaning of their work changed in the process. The case of Morris above all (as Mr. Hough shows in the most interesting essay in this book) contains the whole irony. Designing for the people he created a luxury trade; preaching social revolution, and Icelandic hardness and a medieval guild socialism, he is one of the founders, as Mr. Hough says, of the suburban ideal. The melancholy of the late Victorians is a response to the deception which came from their outstanding success in turning everything to estimable social ends. As an industrial society, with all its horrors, it was nothing like as horrible as any other of the kind.

The detailed, witty and learned observation of the effect on the arts is the making of Mr. Hough's book. The conflict, as I have said, is opened with Ruskin. Those of us who are now middle-aged have the teachings of the sage, though they had become only a mutter when we were young, still echoing in our ears. By the Fifties, Ruskin was saying that the ugliness of the industrial scene, the greed and poverty spread by the machine, had destroyed the visual sense of Englishmen. The eye had forgotten nature and the art of seeing. (Anyone who has troubled to look at *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice* since his childhood will again be struck by the excellence of Ruskin's own exact drawings, which, again and again, though they appear to be so much accurate botany or geology, in fact never fail in idiosyncrasy or drama.) But, for Ruskin, the eye had to be educated and by education he meant a deep change of the moral nature. The word "moral" has, of course, been the stumbling block. At one time, only the Protestant eye could see; at another, the Renaissance had to be "unseen" first; but under the narrowness, the silliness, the manias of an unstable nature, whose manner of seeing, feeling and writing was dramatic before all else, there is a residue of reputable meaning. It is Mr. Hough's point that Ruskin was really using the word "moral" in the sense of the totality of man's moral nature; and, like Morris later on, in his life-long eloquence on the rights of the imagination he found himself preaching a moral and social revolution. The dilemma of both Ruskin and Morris, at this point, (as Mr. Hough shrewdly says) is that of contemporary social critics of the arts: they find themselves taken further and further away from the arts, and dangerously into the glum territories of "the plain man," whose invincible, unseeing plainness started their despair.

In exacting a transcendent place for the imagination in the life of a mechanised society, Ruskin and Morris prepared the way for a new doctrine of which they would have disapproved: the autonomy of the imagination, a separation of art from the interests of common life. I quote Mr. Hough:

> Ruskin does for the painter's imagination what Coleridge had done for the poet's—exalts it into one of the central and dominating seats in the hierarchy of human faculties. Many of the results of his teaching he could not foresee; the consequence he drew from it was that all men should be artists. But others built on Ruskin's foundations a doctrine that he would certainly have regarded as heretical—a belief in the special position of the arts, in their autonomy and their essential independence of social and ethical considerations.

There is the drift towards aesthetic judgments about religion, morals and society and to Mr. Eliot's abhorred religion of culture; on which Mr. Hough has some sensible, correcting things to say. By the time of the Symbolists—Mr. Hough's last essay is a brilliant handling of Yeats's *A Vision*—the separation of the Romantic artist from society is complete. Yeats, coming from an eighteenth-century society and moved by emotions analogous to Blake's, has no feeling except contempt for the contemporary world, and certainly does not wish to reform or preach revolution. He eagerly awaits the inevitable turn in the cycle, from civilisation to barbarism. His is, one is tempted to say, the logical end of the romantic view of life; the wish for death.

But this does not mean, as one has so often heard in the last twenty years, that the Romantics were engaged in an escape from reality. On the contrary, the extraordinary hatred of their own time which each of the Romantics felt was a symptom of their time's spiritual deficiency. There is no comparable instance, that I can recall, of sensitive men having, for such a length of time, feared the direction that life was taking. That fear has not diminished, though, paradoxically, it is in Yeats, the last of the Romantics, that we find an angry stepping forward into a harsh world:

> I mock Plotinus' thought
> And cry in Plato's teeth,
> Death and life were not
> Till man made up the whole,
> Made lock, stock and barrel
> Out of his bitter soul.

And out of that, too, he will build his "translunar Paradise" after death. For Morris, the Earthly Paradise had been in the realm of art, in the mind of the story-teller; for Yeats it is in the soul, the unconscious:

> One of the main results of the speeding up of the rate of change in the nineteenth century (Mr. Hough writes), is the emergence of a vast compensatory longing for a changeless order, a world outside the historic process where the eternal hurry could be stilled. . . . It is this pervasive emotion that attaches itself to most nineteenth-century-medievalising, and, unless we realise it, this large body of poetry is bound to seem aimless and rootless fantasy. Actually it has this very large and powerful tap-root running right through contemporary circumstance to the deepest levels of the psychic life.

Morris, the Marxist, invents a Utopia free from all historical process! And Yeats, among his mumbo-jumbo, dismissing everything that has happened since the seventeenth century with the

* *The Last Romantics*. By Graham Hough. *Duckworth*. 15s.

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arrogant mysteriousness of an astrologer, sees, not indeed Utopia, but inner freedom in the roles of the Hero, the Saint, and the Fool, who, elevated to godlike stature by the Celtic habit of mind, contain souls which the times cannot afflict.

I have purposely kept to the outlines of Mr. Hough's book. It is rich in content and especially in the essays on Ruskin, Yeats and Morris, suggestive and fertile in literary criticism, and closely observes its material. One's only regret is that it stops at Yeats. Why did the Victorian taste for the Past decline? Why, in harsher times, have we so little of it? Because we are experiencing what the Romantics ignored: the wars, the revolutions. They conceived the Past as art. Or is our recourse to Taste the new Earthly Paradise? Or are our colonies in Jung and Freud? Mr. Hough must go on.

V. S. PRITCHETT

ANATOMY OF PARLIAMENT

The Elizabethan House of Commons. By J. E. NEALE. *Cape.* 18*s.*

This is the first of two volumes in which Professor Neale proposes to discuss the Elizabethan Parliament as an anatomist and as a physiologist. The present volume is concerned with its anatomy. We are given here a picture of the election scene, followed by an account of the procedure of the house, its officers and their duties, the ceremony at its opening and at its close. It is in every way a notable book, learned, and yet written with grace and charm, vivid in its power to bring to life not merely the famous figures of a famous age, but also men of the third order even, who somehow pushed their way into the half-faded background of history. Professor Neale has an eye for the picturesque; and he has the gift of dramatic narration in a high degree. The result is an indispensable work, of which one can only complain that, published without its successor, which is to fill this framework with the exciting tapestry of parliamentary history and constitutional struggle, it has a certain static character, the appearance, as it were, of being painted with a flat brush. But it is always interesting and illuminating; and it evokes a sense of real satisfaction to know from its acknowledgements that, just as Professor Neale has broadened and deepened the inheritance bequeathed to him by the late A. F. Pollard, so he, in his turn, is training a company of younger scholars to whom we can look for the continuance of a fine tradition.

There is so much that is of high interest in Professor Neale's first volume that it is difficult to select from among its riches. Certainly it is interesting to observe the eagerness to obtain a seat in the House, especially as the senior member for the county, the effect of victory on family prestige, the influence it made possible, only too often the trickery and knavish skill it involved. It is, in general, true to say that, even so early, the House of Commons was singularly free from the narrow parochialism that is still the most desperate weakness of the American Congress. There is enough fidelity to members in elections to make the House always a body with experience, and yet never enough to make experience confounded with antiquity. Members come into the House young, especially if they are of noble family, and though there was always the little knot of ancients, members over sixty are much rarer than they are to-day. The trusted officials of the Queen obviously speak with exceptional authority, though it is not yet clear whether the Speaker is the servant of the House or of the Crown. There are obviously members with minds of their own, and not afraid to speak forthrightly; while most of the modern types a twentieth-century House reveals are also there. There are the men whose utterance counts, the deadly bores, the specialists in arrogant invective, the men who are best in the lobby, the men to whom the House is already something of a club, the quidnuncs so obviously the predecessors of Tadpole and Taper, the "old parliamentary hands," the specialists in the timidity which makes them incapable of speech, and the members who have arrived at Westminster with no anxiety to permit its proceedings unduly to tax their attention. The proportion of those who had been at Oxford and Cambridge and the Inns of Court is remarkably high; though the inference drawn from this by Professor Neale that the Elizabethan Commons were exceptionally educated seems to me as much a measure of his well-known love affair with Queen Elizabeth as established fact. I suspect, too, that he underestimates the influence of the Government upon elections; where that is brought into play, it is usually effective, and granted the relation of many great families with parliamentary influence to the Court, it is likely enough that the Queen and her Ministers knew that a hint was as successful as a direct instruction, and far less likely to cause ill-feeling.

Professor Neale, I think, has enthusiasm for his period rather than proof pre-eminent when he impresses upon us the high level of debate; the material he cites goes rather to prove that the House contained men of great oratorical gifts, who were listened to with admiration; but gives no clue to their proportion. He speaks of the predominance of Cambridge men earlier, and of Oxford men later, in the reign; if this is not accidental, may it not be connected with the strong disapproval of Puritanism of which Cambridge was so much more than Oxford the nursery? It is interesting to note how strong is the anxiety of the aristocratic father that his son shall be apprenticed early to public life. It is this strong sense of public responsibility that makes the great difference between the English and the French nobility. The importance of the private bill is very striking, and not less significant the expense it already involved, and the power of the influential promoter to get priority over the uninfluential, with the "lobbyist" as the intermediary.

The control of the House's time-table was largely in the hands of the Speaker, and this, naturally enough, made him the necessary instrument of the Government in determining the order of measures; and it looks as though, when he was challenged, he relied upon members of the Privy Council in the House to support his view and get the Opposition voted down. Professor Neale gives an interesting account of how procedure could be used thus early to influence policy, and the effort to maintain decorum. Taken by and large, it was an aristocratic House, deeply conscious of the social position of each of its members, watched with some closeness by the outside world even though its proceedings were supposed to be secret. If, at the beginning and the end of each session, a flowery address was made by the Speaker to the Queen, on behalf of the House, there was almost always a large thread of deep devotion in what he said. For no one can read either the Queen's own speeches, or those made on her behalf by her Ministers, without seeing that the Queen knew how to play upon the humours of her faithful Commons like Paganini on his violin. The brilliance of her performances is astounding; and they are the more moving because their central virtue is their courage. Her "golden words" of 1593 to an England at war have the quality of Chatham and Mr. Churchill at their inspired best. No one can read those words without the conviction that Elizabeth knew with the instinct of genius the direct road to the hearts of her people.

HAROLD J. LASKI

ALL SIDES OF IRELAND

The Face and Mind of Ireland. By ARLAND USSHER. *Gollancz.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

When I went back to my native city lately, there were posters crying at me from the walls—"Learn Gaelic, and be as Irish as the English are English." How differently, I thought, they order these things in France where, in German-speaking Alsace, the school notices simply whisper —"*Il est* chic *parler français.*" But the mind of Ireland has a curious contempt for the fashions of Europe. And the face of Ireland, with its new look of realism, conceals an old outlook of other-worldliness. Spirituality and earthiness, mysticism and realism—Mr. Ussher sees in this combination the essential quality of his country. The Irish countrywoman who rouges her face with a rub of *The Messenger* (a religious tract printed in red ink) is, I suppose, the lowest common multiple of both worlds.

Mr. Ussher, in the cramped space of 140 pages, covers widely his country's history in his lifetime, and comments closely on his countrymen's mind and manners. In a way, the book might be called *The Face and Mind of Arland*, for its clear achievement lies in the detachment and individuality of its author. "I employ," he says, "the method of what I call 'the continually shifting viewpoint'": in other words, he sees all sides of a question, a rare achievement in argumentative Ireland. But then, by name and nature, Mr. Ussher has the advantage of being a shifting person: as a Gaelic scholar he is known as Percy Ussher; as a philosopher he is Arland Ussher; an Anglo-Irishman, he dissented from the Ascendancy; a non-Catholic, he is versed in Catholicism. Yet, admirable as his resulting all-round lack of bias is, I doubt if his countrymen will thank him for it. Detachment, for an Irishman, is not a practical fact; it is a theoretical feat, and not a wise or adequate one either. Was it not AE, that mild Irish mystic, who said, "I pray God for my enemies, but I pray God that I may have enemies to keep me alive." There is something Manichean in the Irish character, some need for opposition, an intuitive recognition of a world built on duality, which makes the Irishman as devoted to a foe as he is to a friend. Mr. Ussher himself says, "The whole of the 'Irish War of Independence' from 1916 to 1922 had, to my sense, a certain atmosphere of *playing*." "Ritual" would be a better word than 'playing' and would more clearly explain what the author adumbrates when he remarks on the comparative civility and order with which the "war" was waged. This sense of ritual, and ordered opposition, is something that is ingrained in all phases of Irish life, from politics to hunting. It belongs to an older world of rural values which believes in evil as well as goodness, in devil as well as God, in hound as well as in hare. Few Irishmen look for the enemy in themselves: they name and nominate him outwardly and by tradition; they know him as a neighbour. "Projection!" says the psychologist. Maybe; but a projection a day keeps the analyst away: and it certainly keeps life undetached in Ireland, enmity sociable, and "war" civil, if not civilised. For instance, I doubt if many Irishmen, North or South, will feel tongue-tied by Mr. Ussher's aloofness about the leaders of the 1916 rebellion—"Whether they were right or wrong who can say? History used them, as she uses us all."

Still—to adopt "the continually shifting viewpoint"—I can think of few more refreshing books on Ireland, as welcome for its wit as for its justice. The author touches provokingly on many aspects of his subject: the Gaelic language, that needle's eye through which every child must pass: the Censorship, which hamstrings intellectual writing: Religion—"For the Irish, almost alone among the nations to-day, religion is still the central reality of life, concerning which discussion is unnecessary." (I remember a bank manager who broke an employees' strike by explaining that the strike came between him and his prayers.) We learn of the Irishman's drinking, which, like his Gaelic music, is mournfully sad ("Even his beer is black"); his gentleness, born of pessimism, which makes him a poor revolutionary ("From Tone to Pearse, how few were of Irish lineage"); his liking for remoteness and priestly inaccessibility in his leaders—a hieratic rather than a demotic feature; his concern with Persons rather than Things, which, to foreigners, makes him seem extraordinarily malicious; his high marrying-age—the average

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On Monday October 31 Jonathan Cape published two novels which will be widely discussed—but for widely different reasons. Watch for the reviews of

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COLLINS

for both sexes is over 30; his insensibility to romantic love, which surely stems from a social and ritualistic conception of marriage. "I never saw my husband till the day we married," said one old woman to me, "yet it was a love-marriage till the day he died."

Mr. Ussher deplores the drabness of farming life, due to the system of small ownership and—as an enemy of the lumpen-proletariat and all levellers—he proposes an aristocratic leaven of large landowners for the lump. He has a hope. As a good European, too, he deplores his countrymen's disinterest in world-affairs ("But all this happened in the outer islands," remarked an old man, talking of the World Wars.) All these topics the author illuminates by his tolerance and detachment. But the wisest men nod, and Mr. Ussher's nod begins where his knowledge ends—at the Border. Northern Ireland, it appears, is no part of "Ireland"; its people are bourgeois, fanatical hard Orange ranters. When he grudgingly concedes that "the ideological penetration" of the agrarian South and West by the urban North-East would be preferable to Communism—well, as an Ulsterman, I feel about as grateful as the London press-man who, listening to a tirade by an Irish statesman against English perfidy said, "But at least you would agree, Mr. Costello, that the English are human beings?" —"I'll give you this much," was the answer, "They are partakers of the mystical body of Christ." If only Mr. Ussher could cut the barbed-wire clichés, and could slip past the ideological sentries, and visit, say, the far parish where the Orange Order started, I could present him with a body of human beings whose face and mind—even in opposition—is so recognisably related to the Ireland of which he writes that I, knowing them, am able to understand him. But maybe I am unfair to him, since he is bound by the original terms and deliberately restricted scope of his subject.

Perhaps like his illustrious ancestor Bishop Ussher who forsook history for poetry (as being the illumination of history) Mr. Ussher may some day be induced to forsake philosophy for those delightful personal reminiscences which he calls "irrelevancies," but which are the revelation of his philosophy.

W. R. RODGERS

NEW NOVELS

Lucifer With a Book. By JOHN HORNE BURNS. *Secker & Warburg.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Stubborn Flower. By OSWALD WYND. *Michael Joseph.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

The Arrows of the Sun. By IVOR BANNET. *Cresset Press.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Parasites. By DAPHNE DU MAURIER. *Gollancz.* 11*s.*

John Horne Burns is one of those American writers who believe in shock treatment. To judge by *Lucifer With a Book* he is a satirical moralist rather than a novelist. He has much of Henry Miller's rich comic gift, a fluency which amounts at times to lallomania, a passion for scatological images and a strong tendency to preach. It is not always easy to discover, in this whirlwind of words, just what Mr. Burns is preaching about, but one thing seems to emerge clearly; nothing is so dangerous and destructive as virginity of mind and body and, until this impediment has been removed, preferably by rape, no one can begin to Live.

The book deals with a nightmare "private" school for both sexes, endowed by a long-dead foundress whose intentions have been deliberately ignored. The Sophia Abercrombie Academy is a hotbed of graft, toadying, dollar snobbery and smart salesmanship; run by a shrewd and complacent dictator, full of rotarian good fellowship and unerring business sense. The meagrely paid staff, ranging from spiteful and frigid aesthetes to hungry misfits who find solace in the proximity of young human flesh, is increased after the war by two ex-service "veterans." Guy Hudson and Betty Blanchard both have a genuine passion for teaching which is later supplemented by a violent passion for each other. They leave the school in virtuous indignation before Betty becomes "the only unmarried mother on the staff," presumably with the intention of founding the American equivalent of a Progressive School.

Mr. Burns has a sharp eye, ear and nose; he can be brilliantly funny and acutely, even poetically perceptive. He describes the human fauna of the Academy with immense exuberance and gusto, but the gusto becomes wearisome in the end like a noisy party that goes on too long. He cannot resist piling on and over-elaborating his effects, exhibiting his static characters in more and more fantastic lights and undignified attitudes till the goaded reader begins to watch unkindly for chinks in the satirist's own armour. These appear when, having determinedly assaulted our squeamishness, he becomes earnest about sex. There are moments when the hero and heroine are much funnier than any of the perverted teachers or erotic pupils. "Oh damn" mutters the "panlike" and "honestly sexual" Guy Hudson, waking in his lonely bed on his first morning at the Academy, "not one teeny goddam lover." Having rudely rejected the homosexual advances of a boy he loathes and nobly refused to involve himself with his ideal pupil ("he caught himself teaching only for the response of Ralph. The boy lay open to him like a maiden") he restrains himself until he rapes his colleague Miss Blanchard on p. 263. He does this with great violence ("an avenging icepick against virgin ice . . . taking out on her whimpering shell all the little meannesses with which she had piqued him") but with the best educational intentions ("And now, Betty, you'll live"). Betty is a most responsive pupil. Later, when she discovers she is pregnant, she says highmindedly "The first night you took me I was aware of all the implications. It seemed to me a privilege to conceive a child by you. If you wish to marry me, our marriage will be as happy as any enforced social arrangement can ever be." On the last page we are left in some doubt as to whether Hudson yields to a "fiendish desire to love you up here and now"—"here" being the foundress's grave. But there is no doubt that this remarkable pair will continue to teach and we may reasonably suppose that Mr. Hudson will put his own educational ideals into practice, "to torture his students, to badger them into a little thought and shatter their complacency."

After the violent impact of *Lucifer with a Book* it is impossible not to be grateful for the economy and restraint of Oswald Wynd's novel about Japan, *The Stubborn Flower*. Having been brought up in that country, the author does not deluge us with local colour, but touches in his setting with neat, sharp strokes. He writes in the character of an American journalist, with the streamlined smoothness of a *New Yorker* story, conveying his effects mainly in dialogue that shows a nice ear for the idiom of each character. The "Stubborn Flower" is a Japanese girl, rescued from a brothel by a dull but decent Englishman and helped to make a career for herself by the American journalist who agreeably surprises us by not having an affair with her himself. The girl Setsue is drawn with considerable charm and dignity; her elegance and reserve are remarkably refreshing after the sprawling, mannerless hoydens of the Sophia Abercrombie Academy. The book ends during the war. Grateful and loyal as Setsue is to her English and American protectors, it is impossible not to sympathise with her in her determination to have her half-Western son brought up in the Japanese tradition of culture.

I have to admit to a strong resistance to novels set in ancient Greece, but I found Ivor Bannet's *The Arrows of the Sun* more interesting and less irritating than most attempts to create an archaic atmosphere. It is written in a solid yet flexible prose which can rise to imaginative descriptions of landscape or of ecstatic states of mind without undue strain. The theme is the legend of Danaë,

a version unfamiliar to me in which Apollo and not Zeus is the father of Perseus. The book moves a little uncertainly; at one moment the author seems to be merely rationalising the myth by supplying Perseus with a human father, the physician Andro, who represents the healing aspect of Apollo; at others, as in the episode of the Graiae, it is difficult to know on what plane Perseus' experience is meant to take place. *The Arrows of the Sun* seems to hover between a timeless esoteric allegory in which the Greek gods are used as symbols of various psychological states, and a myth shorn of much of its poetical significance and reduced to a picturesque historical novel. Nevertheless there is much that is interesting in idea and treatment, notably Perseus's ecstasy on Seriphos, and one is sorry to hear that the writer died shortly before the book, presumably his first, was published. Though the characters are hardly more than symbols of ideas, their outlines are bold and sometimes beautiful, and the landscape against which they move is suffused with light and colour.

I doubt whether Daphne du Maurier's new novel will be as popular as her celebrated *Rebecca*, but to my mind (I admit I have not read her intervening historical ones) it marks an enormous advance on it. There is no room to explore the psychological reasons which I believe to be the basis of *Rebecca's* staggering success. Many people who found nothing shocking in that extremely peculiar book will probably find *The Parasites* "not at all nice"; on the other hand those who could not stomach *Rebecca* may find her latest book well worth looking into. *The Parasites* is not, unfortunately, a work of art. But I make the daring suggestion that it comes nearer to having a real subject for a novel than any of the other three books mentioned here, and that, *potentially*, Miss du Maurier is not a better writer, but a better novelist than any of them. She has got hold of a good theme; two of them, in fact, which she interweaves cleverly though she does not convince us as a major novelist would do that their connection is inevitable. One is an intense relationship between a step-brother and sister which prevents either from having a real partnership with anyone else; the other is the problem of the slick talent which "never grows up." Miss du Maurier is often superficial and still more often embarrassingly whimsical, but she has moments of devastating honesty and an extremely shrewd and compassionate understanding of the brilliant and second-rate. I am not saying *The Parasites* is a masterpiece; far from it. But I think it only decent to admit that I have found many novels with far fewer faults and far more pretensions infinitely less readable.

ANTONIA WHITE

THE POET AS HUMANIST

Collected Poems 1925-48. By LOUIS MACNEICE. *Faber*. 12*s*. 6*d*.

In an age when poets tend to be swallowed up whole by religious or political systems, accepted mainly for emotional reasons, what is remarkable about Mr. MacNeice is his combination of an angry, untidy, generous humanism with the discipline of thought. Polished, learned, almost frighteningly witty as he is, there is yet a sense in which he is the plain man's poet. Decency, measure, courage, a lack of pretence, a making the best of good things while they last, and a facing up to bad things when they must be faced, these are the virtues—the plain man's virtues—which he praises and the virtues, too, which his work exemplifies. Of course, he fights the plain man's battles as the plain man never could. He knows that the standpoint of common sense can be defended only by the use of a subtle dialectic and by a frank acceptance of paradox. It is on the acceptance of paradox, in fact, that his own consistency is based,

> Let all these so ephemeral things
> Be somehow permanent like the swallow's tangent wings.

Thus one of his favourite figures (as he has noted in a lively and perceptive essay on his own work) is oxymoron: the noun and epithet that appear to contradict each other. He might himself be described, in that figure, as an intolerant liberal or a large-hearted nagger. He wants a world in which all sorts and conditions of men can have their say; but when their say, as so often, proves slack or insincere, the say of

> The self-deceiving realist, the self-seeking
> Altruist, the self-indulgent penitent,

he loses his patience. It takes all sorts to make a world, certainly, but making is an activity, and the sorts he approves of must really *make* it. More broadly, to underline this paradoxical consistency, one might say that it is Mr. MacNeice's taste for variety, contrast, obstinate individuality—combined with his feeling that all these must somehow join in "the general dance"—that unifies his vision of the world.

The danger of this humanist attitude, so admirable in many ways in itself, and so difficult to sustain in our own period, is that it is often liable to slacken down into mere moralising. Take such a passage as this:

> . . . . it is our privilege—
> Our paradox—to recognise the insoluble
> And going up with an outstretched hand salute it.

One agrees, of course, in a general way with what is being said (except that it is too general, and I do not really think, for instance, that we should greet the apparently insoluble political divisions of our time, as Browning greeted the Unseen, with a cheer). But is not the tone of voice too flat in one sense, and too stretched in another, the orator's tone rather than the poet's? When, in a long, ambitious poem, full of such moralistic passages, I come, for instance, on this,

> The paradox of a sentimentalist
> Insisting on clinging to what he insists is gone,

I do feel, I confess, a sense of contrast and relief. The tone is right there, these two lines are tight, witty, and have an exact particular application. The moral *fact* is presented, the moral judgment is left (as I think it always should be) to the reader.

Readers of this collected volume will, I think, find themselves lingering a little nostalgically over the dash, vividness, and gaiety of the earlier poems. But the later poems deserve careful reading. Mr. MacNeice is, he has explained, tired of "journalism," tired of "tourism," and is aiming now at making all parts of a poem fit properly together, even if that involves the sacrifice of the brilliant inorganic image and the witty irrelevant sally. "Thus the lines," he has written, "that I am especially proud of in my last book are such lines as these (of the aftermath of the war in England):

> The joker that could have been at any moment death
> Has been withdrawn, the cards are what they say
> And none is wild . . .

or (of a tart):

> Mascara scrawls a gloss on a torn leaf

(a line which it took me a long time to find)." How admirable, certainly, that last line is! Mascara scrawls either a sheen on a torn piece of foliage (and the leaf-shape of the eyelid makes this visually apt) or a commentary on a torn page. This is a first-rate practical application of the Empsonian theory of the poetic pun. Such economies demand harder work from the reader than the old evocations,

> . . . impending thunder
> With an indigo sky and the garden hushed except for
> The treetops moving,

and the old shrewd remarks in passing,

> . . . that a monologue
> Is the death of language and that a single lion
> Is less himself, or alive, than a dog and another dog.

The danger, however, that Mr. MacNeice appears to be at present facing is that of sometimes relapsing—as a relaxation from the strain of such close writing and as a sop to his sense of moral urgency—into the very monologue he deplores. There is a strange gap between his technical mastery when he rhymes or, not rhyming, uses a strict stanza form *An Eclogue for Christmas*,

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June Thunder) and when he writes in a kind of loose blank verse (*Eclogue from Iceland, The Kingdom*). Blank verse seems to make him wordy and solemn and to rob him of his usual wit. There is enough strict writing, however, in the later parts of this volume to leave one eagerly hopeful about his future; and about the distinction of his past, of course, there can be no question at all. G. S. FRASER

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A PSYCHOLOGIST

The Foundations of Common Sense. By NATHAN ISAACS. *Routledge.* 15s.

Mr. Isaacs's ostensible purpose is to make a contribution to the theory of knowledge. What do we know of the outside world and what grounds have we for believing that our knowledge is veridical? To the elucidation of this well-worn subject Mr. Isaacs offers two distinctive contributions.

First, he insists that we must put ourselves—the suggestion is that we have not yet done so—to the trouble of making a full and detailed psychological inventory of the processes involved in knowing. It is, he believes, possible to obtain

> a positive body of information about such matters as the elements and principles of growth of knowledge, the basic criteria of truth and falsity, the grounds for our belief in an objective reality, the nature of the distinction between fantasy and fact.

Such information must, he insists, precede and condition a fruitful approach to the problems that have concerned philosophers. As Sir Cyril Burt puts it in his Introduction, Mr. Isaacs' thesis is "that a complete account of our experience—genetic, historical, and dynamic—must come before any attempt at philosophic argument or criticism."

Philosophers are rebuked for their neglect to take the psychology of the knowing process into account, a neglect which has led them to construct a shadow world of fictitious entities such as sensations, sense data, sense impressions, ideas, propositions and judgments. Instead Mr. Isaacs invokes the notion of "a focalised perceptual field" and devises an elaborate concept of "action."

Mr. Isaacs' second purpose is to confirm the findings of common sense. He sets out at length the reasons why, in spite of the sophistications of philosophers, we continue to believe in the existence of the external world. He finds these reasons to be on the whole valid. They include an elaborate account of how in early childhood the picture of the external world is built up. Mr. Isaacs describes the advance of the child's mind from a belief in the external world as consisting of discrete objects, toys, people, animals, etc., to the acceptance of a framework in which the object is partly merged and which itself breaks up into other objects, and finally to the realisation of the concepts of process and of event.

This psychological work is extremely well done. Mr. Isaacs is noted for his work on child psychology, much of it carried out in collaboration with his late wife, and there can be nothing but praise for his treatment of the development of the child's world.

Mr. Isaacs specifies as a criterion of the reality of the external world that the belief in it works—"the naive perceptual world-picture is clung to because . . . it is the only one that will work." Of course it is, and of course it does. But the fact that it is and does has no bearing, as Berkeley showed long ago, on the nature of its analysis. If the analysis of the external world shows, as Berkeley maintained, that it consists of ideas put into our minds by God, then our everyday belief that it is a collection of external objects extended in space would be in no wise affected. Berkeley's analysis satisfies the criterion of working just as well as the familiar one.

For my part, I do not believe that the attempt to give a psychological account of knowing *can* succeed, partly because the act of knowledge is never wholly describable as a psychological process or event. It is so in part but only in part, for every act of knowledge takes place within a double context. First, it is an occurrence in the psychology of the knower and is, therefore, conditioned by causal laws and subject to investigation and description by psychological techniques, but, secondly—and this is the unique thing about it—this psychological event, a member of a causal series studied by science, is also a knowing of something else. Now, of this aspect of it, the fact that it is a knowing of something else, science can give no account, precisely because the knowing of B by A is a unique relation. As Plato put it in the *Theaetetus*, the table occupies a certain region of space and my body occupies another, but my awareness of the table occupies no region. If I were asked to say where *that* is, I could only answer in my mind, and the mind is not a kind of box with things inside it of which an inventory can be made. The word "in" here does not denote a physical relationship. C. E. M. JOAD

SUPPRESSING THE SLAVER

The Navy and the Slave Trade. By CHRISTOPHER LLOYD. *Longmans.* 21s.

It was Johnson, the Tory, who proposed "in a company with some very grave men at Oxford, 'Here's to the next insurrection of the Negroes in the West Indies'." The Friend of Corsican Liberty could only disapprove. He himself had no doubts at all: as the fox enjoys being hunted, so the Negro enjoyed being enslaved:

> To abolish a *status*, which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be *robbery* to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects; but it would be extreme cruelty to the African Savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life . . . To abolish that trade would be to "shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

Within twenty years of Boswell thus committing himself, slavery had been abolished in the British Empire, while the Powers had declared at the Congress of Vienna their detestation of the slave trade and had even gone so far as formally to recognise that steps should be taken to abolish it. But what steps? Castlereagh proposed an international police force to blockade the west coast of Africa. Since the international force would in practice have been the Royal Navy, the other nations could not agree; and since they could not agree, it was in fact the Royal Navy that largely suppressed the slave trade. The history of its campaigns, for campaigns they were, has been written for the first time by Mr. Christopher Lloyd, and his book, impressively documented, admirably composed (the amount of research that has gone to its making must have been enormous), and very agreeably written, is likely to remain the standard work.

If Mr. Lloyd's book has a hero it is Lord Palmerston, for, the initial impulse of the Abolitionists having spent itself, there was little public support for his anti-slavery activities at home and mainly hostility abroad. By the middle of the century British objections to interference with the slave trade had shifted their ground from the appeal to the Divine sanction and the nature of things, to the appeal to expediency. The Radicals of the Manchester School saw it as an unwarrantable infringement of the principles of Free Trade. Other critics maintained that the naval blockade of Africa was too expensive, that it smelt of imperialism, that it endangered the peace of the world. The Admiralty, which had to provide the ships, thought it a bore, a whim of the Foreign Office. The whole enterprise was represented as merely a "benevolent crotchet"—the phrase is Cobden's—on the part of Palmerston. Inevitably, the measures that could be taken were relatively ineffective; the number of ships patrolling the west coast of Africa was always far too small, and the ships themselves too old, generally outpaced by the slavers, brigs built on the Abolitionist

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Northern seaboard of the United States and often manned by American seamen.

Yet more serious than apathy and opposition in England was the attitude of other nations. The biggest deterrent to British efforts to stop the trade was probably the behaviour of the United States. African chieftains could be persuaded, bribed or bullied into signing agreements, even if they did not keep them for long, to prevent the passage of slaves through their territories. Spain and Portugal could be induced, whatever their reluctance, to grant the Royal Navy the right to search their ships if there was reasonable suspicion that they were slavers. In the Fifties force could even be brought to bear against Brazil. But the United States were another matter altogether: one war, that of 1812, had already been fought with them over the Right of Search; in the South, Boswell's view of the institution of slavery was an undisputed article of faith; while in the North the law that made slaving an act of piracy and therefore a capital offence had been a dead letter from the day it was passed.

Then there was the brute fact that, had attempts at suppression been much more effective than they were, it would still have paid desperate men to run the British blockade with cargoes of Negroes, for the value of slaves had never been greater. And for this, by one of the ironies that attended the fight against the trade, British economy was largely responsible. The South was feeding Lancashire with cotton as never before; while the repeal of the duty on sugar meant unprecedented prosperity in Cuba and Brazil as long as there was labour enough—and a Negro slave was worked to death in four years.

The task of the British seamen off the African coast, harassed by tropical diseases as they were, must have been heart-breaking; and in the end the Foreign Office had to recognise the inevitable: despite the resolute anti-imperialism of the age, Lagos was occupied "to check the aggressive spirit of the King of Dahomey," one of the main sources of slaves. Sierra Leone had been annexed many years before, for an entirely different reason. It was a partial solution to the problem that faced every naval captain who captured a slaver: what to do with the wretched human cargo stowed away like so many carcasses of frozen beef in the hold. Sierra Leone was to be a settlement for freed slaves. So our West African colonies to-day are an essential by-product of the anti-slavery campaigns.

The traffic from West Africa to the Americas may be said to have ended with the American Civil War. Then, for the first time, there was a government in power in the United States wholly sympathetic to the Foreign Office's anti-slavery policy. In 1862 a notorious American slaver was hanged in New York, and American warships joined the British in the blockade of West Africa and Cuba.

Mr. Lloyd traces also the history of the suppression of the East African trade, which came later. Again there was the usual lack of international co-operation; but there was one vital difference: public opinion at home had been fired by the revelations of missionaries and explorers like Livingstone and Baker: the white man was taking up his burden.

Mr. Lloyd quotes with approval Cardwell's comment on the suppression of the West African trade: "I own I do not know a nobler or a brighter page in the history of our country." It was indeed a wholly disinterested act. But Mr. Lloyd, himself the descendant of Quaker Abolitionists, does not allow us to bask in national self-complacency. He reminds us that while Englishmen were putting down the traffic on both sides of Africa other Englishmen half a world away were busy shipping Fiji Islanders into what was slavery under another name in the plantations of Northern Australia.

WALTER ALLEN

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FIGURE IN THE LANDSCAPE

Places of the Mind. By GEOFFREY GRIGSON. *Routledge.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The good topographical essay, like the good landscape painting and unlike the guidebook or the photograph, presents the reader with a scene which, if he happens to be familiar with it, he will recollect in all the force of former intimacy and yet recognise as transformed—altered but unfalsified. The description may be elaborate, but it need not be. A single glancing reference to a detail, observed but dormant during a lapse of years, may, so spotlit, have more evocative significance than any amount of careful write-up—Montbretia growing wild "along savage rocky streams of Co. Sligo." Nor, oddly enough, does this illumination fall only on the remembered or half-forgotten—though these are useful checkpoints for the reader, assuring him that he is being subjected to no mere trickery—for Iceland and Sardinia, say, come home only less lucidly than Ireland or Wiltshire.

Of course there is more to it than this. But at least your good topographer must have, as Mr. Grigson has, a sharp eye, a retaining memory, and an intuition for unexpected relevancies. He must also be a man of distinct personality or anyhow of distinguished character. "Every man," wrote Edward Dayes in his eighteenth-century *Instructions for Drawing Landscapes*, "every man shows his mind as well in his composition and colouring, as in his choice of subject"—assuming, naturally, that he has a mind to show.

Places of the Mind is a valid title. These essays are the product of one of the most curious, in both senses of the word, and independent minds of our time. For one thing, Mr. Grigson is thoroughly serious without embarrassment or implied apology. He thinks it possible, for instance, that *Kubla Khan* was begotten, in part at least, by Hafod in North Wales. He is excited by the possibility and he infects his reader with the excitement—the while he develops a parallel enthusiasm for the scenery of Hafod on its own account. He transforms his possibility into a probability, carrying his reader with him. But his excitement, genuine as it is, is always under discipline. The question, though exciting and therefore not trivial, is, after all, not of the first importance. And so the problem is seriously looked at, but never speciously pressed on one as a practical certainty. Also, values are not confused. The beauty of Hafod, past and present, is more important than its hypothetical connection with Coleridge's poem.

And besides, Mr. Grigson is very well aware that there is another series of values altogether—a series in which such facts as slums and syphilis have a place. He faces that other series wherever it spontaneously impinges on whatever he has in hand—holding perhaps that "value" is in the end a common denominator, though less easily than Keats did—but he pursues the matter in hand, Melittis melisophylum in a Cornish lane or what not, with undeflected gravity.

Yet there is nothing heavy-handed or heavy-footed about this serious pursuit. In the city of Limerick was revealed to him what few Englishmen have understood, that the Irish are entirely lacking any sense of historical perspective—"Beside the junk shop, one should set, last of all, Limerick's museum, which is less a museum, despite torques and blunderbusses and sherds and corporation maces and insignia, than a shrine of relics of 1916 and the rebellion. I.R.A. proclamations, letters of Irish political martyrs and fighters are all mucked up with the Bronze Age and with the eighteenth century and with Aubrey de Vere in a medley of untidiness indifferent to the stratifications of time." Mr. Grigson grasped that visual parable, and he passes it on without seeking to drive it home.

Again, Mr. Grigson is a man of strong feelings, but he is not hunted by them into extreme positions. Particularly he here avoids wholesale condemnation—maintaining an almost liberal hopefulness which sets him apart from the crusted not-so-young Tories as well as from the bigoted blue-printers. He has, let us say, no preconceptions for or against the National Trust. But, since the National Trust is there, he is concerned that it should follow the better rather than the worse line—"Perhaps artists, poets, and ecologists between them will be able to vitalise and transform the museum spirit of the National Trust. One thing indeed the Trust needs to realise: that it must keep itself out of the landscape it holds for us. The preservation spirit endears notices, signposts, turnstiles, railings to the Trust." All of which is true, and timely said.

In fact all the opinions in this book are lively and uncapricious, though one does not always agree with them. In his longest essay, on *Meanings of Landscape*, Mr. Grigson complains that "Eighteenth-century artists and poets do not identify themselves with the depth, wildness, and immensity of the sea or with the assault of sea upon land." And naturally they do not, because so to have identified themselves would have been presumptuous. But if Mr. Grigson implies, as I think he does, that eighteenth-century poets did not write well about storms at sea, then for such a suggestion Falconer's *Shipwreck* is obviously crucial. It was one of the most popular poems of its day and even now no second-hand bookstall is complete without it. Falconer was a sailor whose poem represents a real reaction to a real storm—not the less real because it differs from Masefield's reaction. The truth is that Mr. Grigson has not much sympathy with the central eighteenth-century position as it is expressed in philosophy, painting, poetry, or landscape-gardening. What he likes, and what there is no man better at interpreting, is the Romantics whose radiance reflects backward to James Thomson and forward to Dylan Thomas. And it is this deep understanding of a, necessarily limited, point of view together with his own quite unromantic enthusiasm for botany and archaeology, which forms the warp to a web of clear intelligence in his patterned places of the mind.

GEOFFREY TAYLOR

TOYS OF GENIUS

The Sculptures of Picasso. By DANIEL HENRI KAHNWEILER. Photographs by BRASSAI. *Rodney Phillips.* 45*s.*

From photographs in the fashion magazines, or at second-hand through Cocteau, we have known for years of Picasso's flirtations with the plastic arts—fantasies in clay or wire that thronged the studio at Boigeloup, or those in pottery done during the last few years at Vallauris.

Most of us have tended to regard them with the glance indulgent yet fleeting which was reserved for the relaxations of the very great. But here is Monsieur Kahnweiler to tell us we make "a grave error. The stubborn passion which fires Pablo Picasso does not allow him to indulge in quiet pastimes; even his poetry and his drama form an integral part of his work and of his being, no less than do his painting, his sculpture, his graphic art and pottery. As to his sculpture, its importance cannot readily be overestimated. . . ."

Monsieur Kahnweiler supports his thesis with considerable ingenuity, and 216 admirable plates. He argues, it is fair to say, with an audience only too ready to be persuaded; for who but admirers of the Master would bother to get this handsome volume? And since his genius is of those heroic proportions which seem more proper to the fifteenth than to the twentieth century, it is tempting to think of him as a sort of Daedalus, a Michelangelesque Jack-of-all-trades.

But if we are to believe that Picasso's sculpture, save for occasional lapses of a few years, has always walked hand in hand with his painting, the illustrations in this book are singularly ill-chosen, as ill-chosen indeed as is its title. For they do not begin to give a general view of Picasso as a sculptor. Monsieur Kahnweiler infers that his experiments in the plastic arts were of particular consequence to the artist during his Cubist phase of some forty years ago. But only about

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MICHAEL JOSEPH

six of the objects illustrated belong to this important formative epoch. Two hundred and four date from the last twenty years, and one hundred and twelve of these are work of the last decade. This is perhaps a captious criticism. The question immediately at hand is, were the whole of Picasso's paintings to disappear tomorrow, and the plastic works here illustrated to be the sole surviving evidence of his talent, would one still hail him as a genius, or at least as artist of formidable parts?

Before that question can be answered, one must first disentangle oneself from the indiscriminating enthusiasm which has inspired the choice of the plates. Picasso may not be able to indulge in quiet pastimes; we must take Monsieur Kahnweiler's word for that. But he is certainly capable at times of the most airy frivolities, of creating exquisite fantasies out of matchboxes, cigarette cartons, bread, children's scooters. Snip! Snip! and the drabbest piece of paper takes on a life that is at once disquieting and an enchantment. But these are toys, pure and simple; and toys they must remain, I can't help thinking, for Picasso himself, who does not scruple at times to bedeck them with toy aeroplanes. It is only weakening the case for Picasso as the serious sculptor, to consider them as anything else.

The truth is, we are in danger of smothering Picasso under the Victorian portentousness of our admiration. The pebbles which he so brilliantly incised were meant to amuse for an instant and then to be cast aside, not to be solemnly photographed and catalogued beside works of such profound and disturbing significance as the owl-like figure dating from 1943 (plate 170). Nor, I feel, is Picasso's credit much enhanced by the *dicta* of forty years ago on aesthetics which Monsieur Kahnweiler so reverently quotes. I have not read any of Picasso's poems; but he is, I suspect, like Sir Christopher Wren, a man highly articulate in other media than words.

Yet, when all is said, this book contrives to demonstrate that from beginnings surprisingly enough in the manner of Rodin (the pierrot's head for which Max Jacob served in part as model—Plate 2—is a fascinating curiosity of this phase) Picasso across the years has developed in sculpture an idiom strongly personal, highly ingenious, capable of a passion and at times a beauty quite as powerful as any of his paintings can show, and piercing at times, as do the best of his paintings, to the innermost recesses of what one may dub as one's psychical entrails. The strange creature, for instance, (Plate 213) with the martyred disc of a face, and the single arm stretched out in hopeless revolt from the corrugated body; has one dreamed it already, or is one just about to? When will the full weight of its sorrow become the direct responsibility of one's own unhappy sleep? True, Picasso is there beside it, at the head of the pale face in a double-breasted grey suit, cigarette in hand, to reassure one, to tell one, like the showman in *Petroushka*, it is only a puppet. Yet somehow one suspects things have got a little out of hand . . .

It is of course impossible to tell whether the sculptures, most of which are relatively small—under a metre in height and often much less than that—would, in the original, work so powerfully on the imagination as they do through Brassai's artful photographs. Incidentally, Monsieur Kahnweiler tells us that in 1929 Picasso dreamed of erecting on some Mediterranean shore gigantic sculptures in the form of women's heads, which would serve as houses. Sculpture, I hold, is almost the only domain where mere size becomes exciting for its own sake. The largest liner, the vastest aeroplane, the tallest skyscraper are merely awkward in their tedium. But a gigantic statue, an Ozymandias—Ah! That's a different matter. It is exasperating that a mediocre sculptor in America should have been enabled to hew Lincoln and Benjamin Franklin hugely and ineptly out of mountains, while Picasso could find no one to finance the creation of his colossal female heads.

SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH

SELF-PITY OR SELF-KNOWLEDGE?

27 Wagons Full of Cotton. By TENNESSEE WILLIAMS. *Lehmann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

American drama, more than English, more than French, is in search of the secret life. I take the phrase from Mr. E. M. Forster who, you will remember, wrote in *Aspects of the Novel*, "'All human happiness and misery,' says Aristotle, 'take the form of action.' We know better. We believe that happiness and misery exist in the secret life, which each of us leads privately and to which (in his characters) the novelist has access."

Why shouldn't the playwright "have access," too? What with thought-voices on sound-tracks, optical tricks and Mr. Mitty, the film has some sort of access. Is the theatre alone to miss what Mr. Forster, as against Aristotle, thinks is all the fun? Different as they are, this is surely what Mr. Saroyan, Mr. Arthur Miller and now Mr. Tennessee Williams have in common: as playwrights they seek access to the secret life. The novelist has access because he can tell us what his character thinks. What should the playwright do? He can take to flash-backs like Mr. Miller and Mr. Odets. He can also take to verse on the understanding that, in verse, characters may explain their secret lives in full.

The most impressive of these eleven short plays of Mr. Williams is a verse play. *Purification* is about Spanish ranchers and Indians in New Mexico a century ago, though the author adds "I do not know whether or not people of this type ever lived there, and I don't believe it matters." A magistrate who knows no law but believes in honour is trying an incest case. A husband killed his wife in her brother's arms. Her family demand revenge. The play is in free verse with extravagant but transparent imagery, there is an influence of both Lorca and Brecht. In form this play is realistic, though the dead woman twice haunts the courtroom, and there is a guitar-player whom the judge will sometimes invite to play while the Court takes breath, and witnesses will call on him to help them through a difficult passage with a plangent chord. The end is that husband and brother both having fully explained, commit suicide; honour is satisfied, there is purification, the drought breaks, and the longed-for rain rattles on the thin roof. Theatrically the play has the cunning of a somnambulist. The poetical skill is not so great, but the emotional impact seems out of all proportion. Something more is going on than we are told about. Perhaps the playwright did find access to the secret life?

A companion piece, *The Long Good-bye*, is a prose variation rather in Mr. Odets's style on the same theme, though naturally the conventions of prose realism lead to faint hints instead of firm statements. The effect in this instance is one of sickening sentimentality, and again there is an emotional overplus.

The rest of the eleven are like dramatised short stories. One is about a dying prostitute, another about a prostitute's little sister. Two are stories about insane virgins, one male the other female, both with a crackle of snake-pit humour. In the title story the heroine has an affair with a flagellant. Here is her big entrance:

> After a moment the screen door is pushed slowly open and Flora emerges gradually. Her appearance is ravaged. Her eyes have a vacant limpidity in the moonlight, her lips are slightly apart. . . . Dark streaks are visible on the bare shoulders and arms and there is a large discoloration on one cheek. A dark trickle, now congealed, descends from one corner of her mouth.

Life inhibits, perverts or disgraces sex, exclaim Mr. Williams's characters in the several rhythms of self-pity. Do these Southern States of misery like to be visited too much?

So far self-pity has become the note of the theatre's quest for the secret life, whether in Mr. Miller, Mr. Saroyan, Mr. Odets, or Mr. Williams. And self-pity is the opposite of tragedy. What are we to conclude? That Aristotle was right after all and Mr. Forster wrong? Or that the theatre should be wary of the novelist's secret lives? Or does it perhaps tell us something about the effect on youth of the American family?

These eleven are Mr. Williams's early plays. It is late in the day now to say "Watch Mr. Williams," but I still say it. I believe he states his problems without solving them, and by these I don't mean social and psychological problems but the writer's problems as such. Yet *The Purification* and his full-length plays show a technical command as well as a tortured mind, he may be ruined by his success but at least there is something to be ruined.

MONTAGU SLATER

ISOTYPE MAN

From Cave Painting to Comic Strip. By LANCELOT HOGBEN. *Parrish.* 21*s.*

"*From Cave Painting to Comic Strip* is not," Mr. Hogben says, "a book about art, in the customary sense of the term." That is certainly true enough: the values of art find no place in his text. Is he equally correct in his claim that it "is a picture book about picture making"? It is a picture book, and a most attractive one, with extraordinarily varied and well-chosen line drawings, photographs and coloured plates, but it cannot be said to be at all consistently concerned with picture making. It is better defined, both as to matter and manner, by the opening sentence: "This book is a panorama of the emergence of man as the only literate animal species and a preview to the liquidation of illiteracy on a world scale as a prelude to the unification of mankind." In its account of human communications it does indeed show a bias in the direction of what are now called "visual aids," and the whole work is offered as a tribute to the memory of Dr. Otto Neurath, founder of the Isotype Institute. Yet very many pages are devoted to a history of writing and printing and the development of mathematics, while on the other hand many examples of true visual methods of communication are ignored. For instance, although 'missals' are mentioned ("There is a pathetic earnestness about the tender care with which the monks illuminated their copies of devotional texts"), nothing at all is said of the wall paintings and stained glass which during the Middle Ages provided beautiful and spontaneous forms of visual education for the unlettered.

I cannot find any true continuity of theme in *From Cave Painting to Comic Strip*—a lack already suggested by the title. It is a history well designed to give openings for the author's special interests, beliefs and prejudices. These are clear enough; science is throughout the light that leads to "progress," liberty is always honourably championed, but other values are generally held to have been vitiated by a "miasma of moral indignation." The issue emerges very clearly in the condemnation of the eighteenth century, and of Dr. Johnson, "the man whose pretentious pedantry, sonorous pomposity and moral vulgarity dominates the English scene." Samuel Johnson is so belaboured (in his absence; I should dearly like to witness a contest between these two men) because he has questioned the necessity of scientific teaching in schools. "Prudence and justice are virtues and excellences of all times and all places; we are perpetually moralists but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary and at leisure." Is this really pompous or morally vulgar? May not its very power to irritate depend on our own unwilling recognition of its good sense?

This is where *From Cave Painting to Comic Strip* becomes alarming as a revelation of those rationalist habits of mind which seem so certain always to defeat their own ends. Mr. Hogben is distressed that popular visual education has been debauched by comic strips and the cinema—a debauchery which, he fears, will make it harder to unite the human race by means of Isotypes

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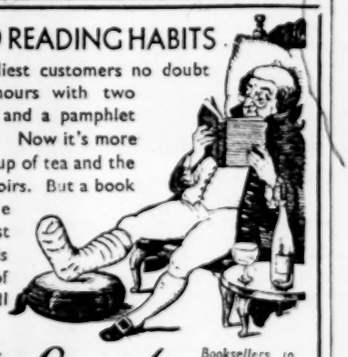

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and an auxiliary international language. Yet was not the new illiteracy that feeds on comic strips largely brought about by blind scientific materialism and a refusal to recognise wisdom as well as bigotry in the judgment of Dr. Johnson and other such detestable "mandarins"? In advocating what is only a good mechanism for communication, Mr. Hogben does not seem to worry enough about what would be communicated. The mechanism is well designed to serve the intellectual tyranny which he abominates in a world as rigid and inhuman as that of the Isotypes themselves.

The development of visual education in this country shows a tug-of-war between those who want to use it for instruction without tears, and those who would lay more emphasis on the training of the eyes and imagination. It is significant that Mr. Hogben should have no interest in the imaginative and æsthetic approach, the aspect of "pictures" which really does transcend national boundaries and propaganda. This lack of sympathy results in what is to my mind a misinterpretation of the art of the cave-painters, and to a deliberate neglect of other artists except at the Renaissance, when their concern for anatomy and the laws of perspective allows them to shine for a moment in the light of scientific progress.

It may also be significant, as well as ironical, that Mr. Hogben's own style should be exceptionally lacking in visual imagery or rhythmic persuasiveness. Sometimes it is successfully vigorous, but often there is an obscurity which perhaps is due to the fact that it is intended for "the Anglo-American speech community." The opening sentence has already given a fair impression of the whole; the reader also has to put up with a great many set-ups, tie-ups, face-ups and show-downs and rather many phrases such as "the liquidation of nudity" and "contraindicates the likelihood." As a foil to Johnsonian sonority I offer this passage: "to strip away from the situation everything likely to distract attention from the proposition which invites attention. Standardisation of conventions and simplification of form are indeed the basic desiderata. . . ."

It is a clever, unwise book, full of a sincere if too vast idealism. It should be bought both for its excellent production and its stimulating energy. But for me it stimulates bad dreams: the army of little Isotype men with Mr. Hogben and other leaders rendered as gigantically as the pharaohs were rendered of old. They march towards a goal which they drive further and further into the distance, until with a fine mushroom-shaped symbol they disappear—at once unified and liquidated.

JACQUETTA HAWKES

DETECTION AND THRILLS

Swing, Brother, Swing. By NGAIO MARSH. *Collins.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Cat of Many Tails. By ELLERY QUEEN. *Gollancz.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Dead Lion. By JOHN and EMERY BONETT. *Michael Joseph.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Case of the Giant Killer. By H. C. BRANSON. *Bodley Head.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

John Kyleing Died. By E. and M. A. RADFORD. *Andrew Melrose.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Brat Farrar. By JOSEPHINE TEY. *Peter Davies.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

"It's Loaded, Mr. Bauer." By JOHN P. MARQUAND. *Hale.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Lord Highport Dropped at Dawn. By ROWLAND WINN. *Cassell.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Take an eccentric peer, a marquis for preference; throw him into a jazz-band well lined with bad characters; mix in his aristocratic relatives, add a hypodermic of dope, and stir furiously until a murder takes shape; then skim at leisure, and serve with a pinch of salt. Miss Marsh has a wonderfully light hand at this sort of dish. Give her a nice, ripe peer, like Lord Pastern in *Swing, Brother, Swing*, and she will serve up a most appetising plateful. Only when you start to sort out the murder from the trimmings do you wonder—what *is* the meat? *Baleine* again? Chief Inspector Alleyn, who actually witnesses the crime, takes half the book to solve it, and I can only urge readers, while he is doing so, to get on with their skimming.

Homicidal lunatics have always been disqualified in serious detection for obvious reasons. The supposedly sane murderers behave oddly enough to test all our powers of reasoning, without our being called upon to make sense of the deeds of maniacs. Yet there is a movement on foot among detective authors to refurbish madmen with proper medical credentials, and thus invest them with some new palatability. Carter Dickson's last book was a case in point. Now Ellery Queen goes a step further. From the outset of *Cat of Many Tails* we are aware that this series of apparently casual garrottings which scares New York into fits is the work of someone insane; and we are encouraged to peer about for a suitable candidate to fill the bill. Ellery Queen is advancing the theory that there must be method even in madness; and that a psychological study of the method should reveal which particular lunatic likes tying knots round necks. Therefore the reader can have no cause for complaint: he has only to catch up on his psycho-analysis and trail the symptoms to their lair. A promising theory—how does it pan out? *Cat of Many Tails* is most entertaining and spectacular as long as the stranglings keep on their way, but goes dead as soon as psychiatry intervenes. Ellery cannot be sure how much we all know about the subject, so he tells us plenty—and plenty of that long-winded jargon is more than one deserves for light reading. As to spotting the lunatic, that becomes all too simple. Unless the whole world is peopled with psychopaths (see how easily one slips into the lingo) the unstable characters in sight are bound to be few. In *Cat of Many Tails* there are only two. Ellery has to fly to Vienna and interview an old wizard of psycho-analysis in order to pick the right one. NEW STATESMAN readers can do so at home.

Dead Lion makes a topical appeal. When the eminent dramatic critic is guillotined by the fall of a window-sash, the only evidence of murder is a fragment from *This England* found beneath the body. Ha! A careless NEW STATESMAN reader leaving fingerprints? We must handle our copies more warily in future, when we go out killing reactionary brutes like Cyprian Druse—the beastly blackmailer! Mr. and Mrs. Bonett report on the cultural habitat of readers of this journal in a most exhilarating and frisky style. But their amateur detective is soon sidetracked from the rigours of detection into the more rewarding pursuit of a glamorous young woman. Still, what with love, badinage, comic interludes and the final confession of the N.S.-minded culprit, *Dead Lion* will be found very readable.

Mr. Branson is an American exponent of the Freeman Wills Crofts school. His plots are invariably sound and his prose is incorrigibly pedestrian. In *The Case of the Giant Killer*, where a couple of small-town business men get murdered on the shores of Lake Erie, the layout of the crimes is distinctly ingenious, yet our interest is dashed by the slow pace at which John Dent unravels the proceedings. Furthermore Mr. Branson must learn to introduce the villain with more aplomb. As it is one cannot help noticing that attendant figure, waiting in the wings for his curtain call.

John Kyleing Died can be read for quiet amusement—to see how many howlers of fact and grammar you can detect behind the authors' parade of general knowledge. The gem of my collection is page 127, on which the road from Brighton railway station to the sea comes out almost opposite the Palace Pier; the Romans invaded Britain after the Saxons; and ravens nest in their hundreds at Rottingdean. To cap

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the absurdity, even the authors' claim to have discovered an entirely new method of murder must be disallowed. It occurred in an American detective story years and years ago.

Brat Farrar is a well-written crime novel, with an element of mystery for anyone who cares to treat it as detection. The hero is a sort of Tichborne claimant. But when he turns up from America in an English county family and starts impersonating the long-lost heir to the property, why does not the person who recognises him as a fraud expose him immediately? As readers of *The Franchise Affair* will remember, Miss Tey has a wonderful gift for portraying impostors; and the character of Brat Farrar, combining charm with deceit, is a triumph of her art. I suppose that her vision of country life, where the impoverished gentry keep their end up in the class-war with gymkhanas and jodhpurs, is also a triumph—but one that Mrs. Miniver will appreciate more than I do.

The two thrillers strike very different attitudes. "*It's Loaded, Mr. Bauer*" recounts the war-time adventures of a prim American mining engineer, when he runs into love and Nazi intrigues in the Andes. Mr. Marquand churns out this romantic butter with the nonchalance of an experienced dairyman: he knows exactly what his public expects and he provides it. *Lord Highport Dropped at Dawn* is based on the author's experiences of guerilla warfare in the Balkans, which appear to have left him with a sour view of Balkan guerillas and British Staff Officers, a wise-cracking philosophy of life and an exaggerated style: the combination is pleasantly astringent. The plot is wildly fantastic; but there is a genuine ring about those ideological guerillas. RALPH PARTRIDGE

NIBBLING AT CRIME

Mass Observation Report on Juvenile Delinquency. By H. D. WILLCOCK. *Falcon Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Penology is not a subject that lends itself to haphazard inquiry. You cannot go about observing delinquents unobserved, and this short report, in the absence of the usual M.O. technique, is in some respects a distressingly unscientific compilation. Fortunately it contains just enough material to make up for the scrappiness of its presentation. There is no danger of its being used by the advocates of the firm hand. At least it will help to dispel the illusion that the methods used in this country for coping with juvenile delinquency are either efficient or humane.

It opens with extracts from the Diary of a Prison Chaplain, a well-meaning person who has studied medical psychology. Here, by way of prologue, he is restricted to a few remarks about one young sexual offender, whose age and social background are—typically, I am afraid—omitted. Towards the end he or another with an identical style, for it is not clear how many chaplains are contributing, is quoted on homosexuality in Borstal, about which he makes some rather rash observations, and the futility of treating psychopaths as criminals. There is a chapter headed—speciously, surely—"Everyone A Delinquent," which lists instances of undetected pilfering of the kind that schoolboy-minded adults indulge in, such as pinching fish-knives from the Corner House on Boat Race night, and which quotes among its authorities the *Daily Mail*. There are some rather thin, descriptive sketches of scenes where potential delinquents congregate. Much more interesting are the family groups, especially a lively South London tribe all of whose members live in a state of marginal illegality. But the only section that contains anything in the way of new or startling material is that which deals with Institutions. One of the principal items here is a boy's story of brutal treatment at an Approved School. Unfortunately we are not told when this incident occurred or how long after it the boy's account was written down. After running away several times he is finally recaptured and gets this reception from the Headmaster:

> He started by taking hold of me by the hair and giving me two black eyes. He then kicked me in the stomach and winded me. I ran to the fireplace and picked up the poker and threatened him with it. Then two officers pounced on me and held me down while the Head beat me something terrible. When I got to my feet it was only to be knocked down by a terrific blow on the mouth. He then laid me across a chair and gave me fourteen strokes with the cane on the back and backside. After this he took off his coat and belted me all round the office . . . I must have lost consciousness because I remember coming round crying "Father, father, stop, stop!" I was completely out of my head. When he had finished beating me he led me down to the showers kicking me all the way. I had a cold shower which brought me to my senses a bit. When I was putting on my shirt again I saw that it was covered with blood. When I had dressed one of the officers went to fetch the best boxer in the school. When he arrived we went into the gym and the boy put on boxing gloves and I was made to fit on a pair and then the boy was told to tan me . . .

The Editor of the *Report* appears to take this at its face value. Unless the boy was grossly exaggerating, it is hardly surprising that after this he declares that he would rather have done six years at the reputedly tougher Borstal, to which he was later transferred, than have stayed at the Approved School. According to the Editor of the *Report*, this is not an isolated instance, and the Approved School appears to merit a sharp probe. As for Borstals, their efficiency can be gauged from the following figures: "Of 3,367 boys discharged from Borstal during the years 1935-38, 1,389 had been reconvicted by September 1946. At the outbreak of war, all Borstal boys who had served not less than six months of their time were released. Of 2,817 released in 1939, 1,419 had been reconvicted by September, 1946." These, incidentally, are almost the only statistics which the editor of the report sees fit to include. A list of all its important omissions would be long and tedious. Nevertheless it provides evidence pointing towards the fatal conclusion that, despite good work done by individuals and bodies such as the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, the treatment of most juvenile delinquents, and certainly of the adolescent ones, is subject to the considerations that govern the penal system as a whole. These are based on the principle of imprisonment as a deterrent, a stupefacient, and a means of canalising crime into officially manageable channels. Until this state of affairs is altered little real progress will be made. MAURICE RICHARDSON

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LABOUR MONTHLY

(Founded 1921. Editor: R. Palme Dutt)

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of the seas has apparently to be bestowed on our contemporaries by aid of a patent oil with 69 ingredients. Magic ought not to be too mechanistic; nor will all readers perhaps relish Mr. Linklater's discovery that Davy Jones is an ex-Etonian. But there are compensations galore, particularly Cully the octopus, whose own poetic compositions—"The Seal is sitting on the rock, So cool, so calm"—betray a surprising and pleasing familiarity with the work of Paul Verlaine.

The next "find" is *Contes de la Terre et de la Mer*, agreeably translated by Crystal Herbert. Folk or fairy tales, as you please, these *Contes* are ageless in their appeal, for the simple reason that there is beauty and magic in them, and just the right mixture of terror. (What sloppy sentimentalist first foisted on trusting children the theory that the "little people," the dread host of the Sidhe, are sugary philanthropists?). And if, being eight years old, you haven't learnt enough of women's hearts to understand fully why no daughter of Count Pirou married Eric the Red, or what sort of a fairy was Marlusine, or what moved Rose de la Beurrière to the fatal impulse which made her cast back into the waves the talisman of the Prince of the Sea—never mind: you will have loved the stories for what they are, or seem to be, on their exciting surface. And, surely, it is only fair that the reader-aloud should be permitted his private smile, his own, not-to-be-shared sigh.

AYLMER VALLANCE

CONFLICTS IN SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Without Halos. By J. CHRISTOPHER HEROLD. *Columbia University Press. Cumberlege.* 15*s.*

This is an interesting book. Not, as it was meant to be, a startling, clever book, a sort of Lytton Strachey on the Swiss; but a thorough, closely packed analysis of Switzerland by an American who spent his youth there. Consciously a "cynic," Mr. Herold is something of a nihilist, and his writing, falling short of brilliance, intermittently twinkles. He sees his book as disillusioning, debunking. In fact, it is quite straightforwardly instructive.

Switzerland is not, Mr. Herold would have his readers know, the New Jerusalem. It is, in a word (Mr. Herold's word, the usual word), a *paradox*. For consider: the Swiss have a closer popular control of government than any other people, yet their women have no vote. They are the richest, technically the most advanced of European peoples, yet their social services are frugal, and even old age pensions were not paid until 1948. The Swiss have the most efficient industries, but working hours are long. They have the greatest variety of newspapers, and the greatest uniformity of outlook. They have the most romantic landscape, the least romantic spirit of any European people.

The Swiss have been at peace with their neighbours since 1815 and with themselves since 1848, yet still they will not recognise the conscientious objector. They have sheltered extraordinary aliens, accepted the intellectual leadership of such as Calvin, Nietzsche, Jung and Jaspers, yet native Swiss like Rousseau, Constant, Fuseli, Klee, Honegger and dozens more, have gone abroad to make their mark. Drawn from three of Europe's leading races, the Swiss Confederation is a model and a nucleus for a European Union, yet the very success of their State has made the Swiss conservative of political and economic frontiers.

The crucial point of Mr. Herold's analysis is this: that the celebrated Swiss democracy is rooted not in a progressive spirit, but on the contrary, in conservatism and even reaction. I think he is right. The great philosophical historians from Tacitus to Montesquieu held that rule by the people in all the most important questions affecting their lives was a peculiarly Germanic institution, and that in those countries where political institutions rested on Germanic origins, freedom had preceded tyranny and servitude. Rousseau proclaimed that man, originally free, was now in chains, and the obvious inference was that to become free again, people had to go backward rather than forward. The cantons of Switzerland did not have to go backward—they had never gone forward. Their primitive democracy was much the same as that of their ancestors in the time of Tacitus. It was their reluctance to change which caused them to fight for their independence.

The old, Catholic mountain cantons have always been the stronghold of legislation by the popular assembly *en masse*, and thus of Switzerland's unique direct democracy. The Liberal, industrial, Protestant influence of the cities and the plain has been to centralise and streamline the constitution on the style of other Western states. And this perhaps is the "paradox" that explains the other paradoxes—in Switzerland the Liberal movement and democracy have been, not natural allies, but forces historically in conflict.

MAURICE CRANSTON

Six Centuries of an Oxford College. By R. H. HODGKIN. *Blackwell.* 25*s.*

For five centuries the statutes of Robert de Eglesfield controlled the life of Queen's College, Oxford. Its founder was a comparatively poor man; in 1342, the year after he had paid the sum of £20 for the charter enabling the college to be founded in breach of the Statute of Mortmain, he was sued by a priest for a debt of that very amount. His statutes, minutely and capably drafted, included a clause requiring all future Provosts to swear that they would try to obtain influence with the Queen of England, as he had with Queen Philippa, and with other persons who might increase the endowments upon which the Fellows and Poor Boys of his small foundation could continue their studies. Mr. Hodgkin's history of the College, published shortly after its 600th birthday, traces the many changes in customs and method, in architecture and personalities, with lightness and with scholarship. The most profound development in University life came with the sixteenth century, when Queen's led the University in the practice of accepting commoners to read for a time in the College. Fellows were no longer a mere group of celibates engaged upon an exactingly long period of study for their doctorates (originally it was 18 years), or hungrily awaiting the falling in of a benefice; the tutorial system, originally confined to the Halls, or in Colleges to a restricted number of Poor Boys, began its vigorous growth, until in 1612 Queens with a list of 194 Commoners headed the University. In the nineteenth century the number was to fall to half that. Changes such as this were common to all Colleges, and this book is, in miniature, a history of Oxford. Mr. Hodgkin pays tribute to the generosity of the College's Provosts and Fellows which enabled the rebuilding to be carried out, and particularly to the good sense of Lancaster, who, rejecting the elaborate designs of Hawksmoor, was himself responsible for the lucid building which now commands the curve of the High Street.

The Use of English. Vol. I, No. 1. *Bureau of Current Affairs.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

Yesterday's original thought is to-day's cliché. The lean, swift utterances of the rebellious pupil too soon carry headmasterish corpulence. Strenuous accuracy is no prerogative of the progressive, even in education. It's sad that such bad-mannered objections should intrude upon one's welcome of this new quarterly, *The Use of English*, "by practising teachers for practising teachers." The editor, Mr. Denys Thompson, believes that, if people don't learn to understand good English, they'll have no power to resist the shoddy commercial outputs of bad English, and their minds will suffer for it. An article called "The Reading Habit," by Mr. Boris Ford, sets out to show just how their minds will suffer. It draws upon some moderately interesting but quite untestable statistics compiled by the Hulton Readership Survey 1948, the British Institute of Public Opinion, Mass Observation, and Dr. Gallup. Gradually the chanciness and flabbiness of Mr. Ford's generalisations make one feel that the argument, for all the sympathy it musters, is too large for the matter. "We are both blasé about words and besieged by them, and in consequence our standard of reading, *and with it the quality of our current literature*, is poor, to say the least." The italics are not Mr. Ford's, nor the question, what can he mean by this all-inclusive phrase "current literature"? The more carefully one reads this article, the more one doubts every word of it. It's the worst case here of high-handed overdraft on assumptions, but the red ink peeps out on other pages too, and upsets confidence. The old *Scrutiny* phrases—"adult," "facile emotion," "stock response," "the cultural situation"—it's time they were all marked "Refer to Drawer." Nevertheless, the technique of *The Use of English* proves excellent, wherever it stays within its means. "Drama in the Classroom," by Mr. F. Whitehead, deals only with living particulars, and could hardly be better; all the larger points can be seen making themselves. "Learning Grammar," based on experiments in Budapest, by Dr. Elizabeth Baranyai, says some very interesting things about the difficulties of grammar for children. The vigorous reviews, and the amusing notes about a recent "National Conference on School Broadcasting" make a real attack on complacency, not impeded by a merely opposite complacency. There is need for *The Use of English* and it should become valuable. But when it takes too wild a swipe at "civilisation" or "the environment" it only contacts the air and lands on its own nose.

The Wisdom of India. An anthology compiled and annotated by LIN YUTANG. *Michael Joseph.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This book will be very valuable to those who find light in the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, from whose riches it makes an ambitious selection. The whole development of Hinduism is telescoped into a group of the Vedic hymns, extracts from Max Müller's *Upanishads*, a new version of the *Gita* in contemporary English less free than Christopher Isherwood's, and Vivekenanda's rendering of the Patanjali Sutras; that other classic of Vedanta *The Crest Jewel* is missing, which is a pity since there is no adequate version available in this country. A selection from the *Ramayana*, the Indian epic which awaits its Dr. Rieu, represents secular literature in the familiar Everyman translation, but a number of fables, which will be unfamiliar to most readers, supplies it with a very welcome contrast. The Buddhist selection contains Max Müller's *Dhammapada*, and various sermons and parables in excellent American translations. Parts of the *Surangama Sutra*, compared by the editor to the Fourth Gospel, and *The Fire Sermon*, familiar to readers of *The Waste Land*, balance the whole of *The Light of Asia*, which reminds us of the pioneer work of that persistent orientalist, Sir Edwin Arnold. A few pages from the Lankavatara Sutra answering the question—What is Nirvana? serve to remove some classic misconceptions concerning the negative quality of Buddhist thought.

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